

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH



SOCCER

VOL. 20 No. 920 - TUESDAY 2 MARCH 1999

• REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST • PUBLICATIONS No. N805726

WEEKLY

\$3.00

King Kresimir

To be or not
to be...

Act I, Scene II (page 7)



SOCCER WEEKLY

AUSSIE & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204.

Tel (02) 9562-0559 (Direct Line) Fax (02) 9550-9332

E-mail: soccerweekly@hotmail.com

Published every Tuesday by FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204

DISTRIBUTION

NSW/ACT: FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204. Tel: (02) 9562-0500

VICTORIA: FLP Pty Ltd. 72-78 Gipps Street, Collingwood. 3066. Tel: (03) 9486-9522 Fax: (03) 9486-9858

QUEENSLAND: Queensland Newspaper Campbell St, Bowen Hills Qld. 4006 Tel: (07) 3252-6011

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Advertiser Newspaper Ltd. Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000 Tel: (08) 8218-9329

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Pan Hellenic Emporium, 67 James Street, Perth WA 6000. Tel: (08) 9328-4779

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Recommended and maximum price, \$3.00

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Valsport TEAMS UP WITH FALCONS IN EXCITING NEW DEAL

By Aidan Ormond

Valsport and Ericsson Cup side Gippsland Falcons have teamed up in a deal that will see the company kit out the team in the Italian brand.

Gippsland Falcons officials are delighted with the new deal that sees the distributors of Valsport boots, Golsport, make their first venture into the national league.

Valsport is an established Italian sporting brand specialising in products



Valsport meets Gippsland Falcons... Valsport's Angelo Magrone (far left) and David Magrone (centre) with Falcons' Welsh International Jeff Hopkins and ex-Blackburn Rovers player Stuart Munro (extreme right), the Gippsland coach. Pic by Melbin

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used for soccer.

Since 1920, Valsport has played a leading role in the development of football throughout Europe always conveying its public image through international athletes, from Gigi Riva and Daniele Massaro, to today's stars Billy Costacurta and Roberto Di Matteo.

Thanks to these professionals but mostly because of the quality, the Valsport products have been distributed and appreciated in European countries, Africa, Asia and North America.

As of February 1998, Valsport arrived in Australia fulfilling an idea and dream of a young Australian soccer enthusiast, David Magrone.

With considerable help from his father Angelo, David created the company Golsport.

After a few months of good work and the complete support from Valsport Italy, Golsport are now the exclusive distributors of Valsport products Australia wide.

Golsport launched its initial introduction of Valsport by

approaching players directly. This allowed Golsport to have a "hands on" position in the monitoring of the Australian player responses.

Not surprisingly the response was fantastic, therefore Golsport has progressed in its marketing approach, securing several specialist retail stores to stock the Valsport products.

Players can now be seen wearing Valsport in the National Soccer League of Australia.

Golsport is continuing the growth of Valsport in Australia, and has adopted the traditional values of its parent company in Italy, by supporting soccer in the community.

Golsport have just put the final touches on a unique sponsorship deal with National Soccer League Club, the Gippsland Falcons.

Development and Promotions Officer of the Falcons, Mani Gotis approached David Magrone looking for a footwear sponsor for his club and players.

Knowing the worldwide success of

Valsport, Mani Gotis and the Falcons team submitted a detailed proposal of the sponsorship to Golsport. There were several obvious attractions in the proposal, but the support the Gippsland Falcons give in terms of development and promotions to players in and around the Latrobe Valley area was the highlight.

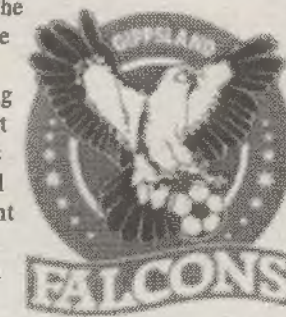
This proposal was sent to Italy and with their confirmation, the sponsorship was sealed. Both Golsport and the Gippsland Falcons want their current relationship to continue in future seasons.

All players in the squad will wear the model called the Autografo Black which is also worn by Chelsea and

Italian star Roberto Di Matteo.

In Australia next year there will be new models introduced on the market.

Jeff Hopkins, Gippsland Falcons captain and former Welsh International roadtested the boots on the weekend and was more than happy with the Autografo Black.



Australian News

CARLTON **SOLD** TO NEW CONSORTIUM

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Peter Jess, head of Network Sports Limited, the new owners of Carlton Soccer Club, announced on Sunday at a media conference the plans of the group regarding their purchase of the club.

"We're here for the long haul" said Jess. "It's a serious bid to build a platform to bigger things."

"Soccer's only got one way to go, up. We believe that the soccer market has been largely untapped."

The press conference didn't really reveal anything startling, most of it was already well known.

Planning for next season, both on and off the park, is already well underway.

Jess, a prominent AFL players manager, along with a consortium that also includes Gary Cocks, Nick Bideau and Blues general manager Lou Sticca, have bought the club from Carlton Football Club.

"Carlton Football Club have done a great job. They've given the club a great playing and coaching roster" Jess said.

The new name or whether it will indeed change, is not known as yet,

although Melbourne Blues is believed to be one of the options.

"There are quite a few names going around" said Jess. "At this stage, we're not convinced we need to make a change."

"But I think for people to take us seriously, we need to rebrand and relaunch the club."

"We'll test the market on whether we'll remain as

Carlton or some

derivative of

Melbourne,

we've got to

be able to reach

all people."

A venue for next season

is something else which

will be decided in the next

few months.

Optus Oval saw its last game on

Sunday. Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic

said it wouldn't be missed.

The ground has come in for lots of

criticism from both opposition clubs and

Soccer Australia for its cricket wicket on

the left hand side of the pitch.

Also, the ground has no lights, which

has affected the club making the flexibility

of kick-off times fairly limited.

Although they will see out the season at Olympic Park, the soon to be completed Docklands stadium, Bob Jane Stadium and Olympic Park are all candidates for the Blues' new home.

Next season, the plans are to play home games on a Friday night.

One of the things the new consortium must do is pay Soccer Australia \$500,000 for an existing licence holder that has changed hands.

Sam Prenesti

and Elaine

Fabris, both

members of

the 'True

Blues'.

Carlton's official supporters

club, although not

hearing anything new,

were nonetheless encour-

aged by what Jess had to say.

"I like the fact that they're still undecided on the name change and venue, it shows that they're not rushing into anything" said Prenesti.

Prenesti and Fabris said that the 'True Blues' will be seeking a meeting with the new consortium as soon as possible.

The club is going to remain fully professional and, most importantly accord-

ing to Prenesti and Fabris, multicultural.

Jess emphasised that one of the aims of the new club will be giving young talent a chance.

Carlton already boast arguably Australia's best band of young players with the likes of Simon Colosimo, Marco Bresciano, Archie Thompson, Joe Tricarico and a few others regularly featuring in the first team.

"We'll be pushing through young talent, we want to be known as a club who will give youth a chance" Jess said.

Both Jess and Krncevic on Sunday alluded to more possible signings within the next couple of weeks, most likely young players. Nick Papadopoulos from Premier League side Green Gully Cavaliers is believed to be a target to replace the players expected to be missing for seven weeks with the Young Socceroos.

Foundation members will not lose any of the benefits they currently enjoy, they, along with other members of the club, are uppermost in the mind of the consortium.

"We want to build a strong club that members will enjoy" explained Jess.

Jess had been interested in becoming an accredited FIFA players agent, but

said that the world governing body would most likely frown upon combining that as well as being involved with a football club.

• It looks like another media beat-up over a minor incident at the Wolves v Spirit game. SW was inundated with calls on this. Next week we will seek to find some answers on this alarming media trend. 'It is important to understand that this was not a disturbance between rival fans,' said Soccer Australia in a press statement.



NEXT WEEK

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with

Danny Tiatto

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Australian News

TASMANIAN SOCCER JOINS THE NATIONAL SCENE

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Tasmania should have a soccer team in a national competition next season, not in the Ericsson Cup, but a youth team in the National Youth League.

John Barker, president of Soccer Tasmania and a Soccer Australia commissioner representing the states and territories, said that negotiations to have a team from Tasmania in the National Youth League Southern Division were "well down the track".

Should the Tasmanians get the nod from Soccer Australia, the team, under the auspices of Soccer Tasmania, will represent the whole of the state.

"At the moment, there are no structured avenues for young Tasmanian players to be able to go interstate and play at a higher level" said Barker.

"Our aim is to give the players that opportunity with a team in the National Youth League."

Some of the clubs already in the NYL Southern Division have expressed concern about the costs of getting to Tasmania for games.

Barker is well aware of the concerns.

"We're looking at ways that costs can be minimised,

everything is being considered."

The Southern Division of the NYL this season has only seven teams competing in it, while the Northern Division is run along the line of the Ericsson Cup with 15 teams.

While a side from Tasmania would make the Ericsson Cup a truly national competition, Barker said there were more logical solutions.

"I wouldn't be encouraging those thoughts, not at this stage anyway."

"The long-term support base needed for an NSL team makes it difficult."

Barker went on to say that a Tasmanian team

playing in the Victorian Premier League

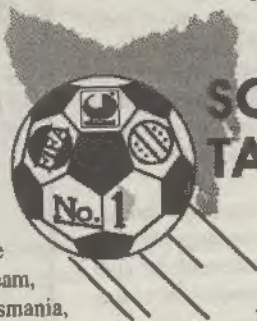
could be a possibility.

"We're a long way off a team in the NSL. The first step is to get a team in the NYL, then the logical extension would be to have a team in the Premier League in Victoria."

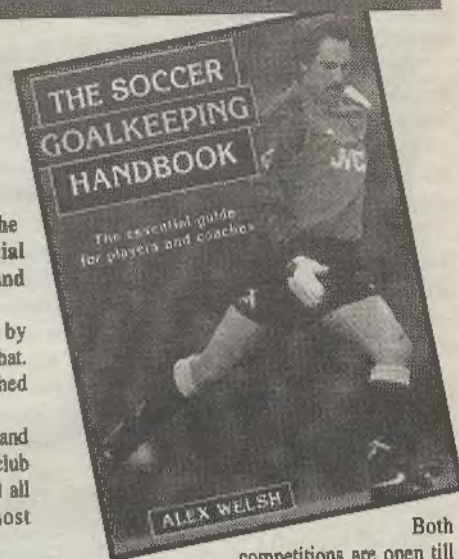
"Another potential possibility could be if an NSL second division ever got up and running, but we've got to wait before we run, youth league first, then hopefully a team in the Premier League."

Strengthening ties with Victoria is another thing high on the agenda at Soccer Tasmania.

The season in Tasmania will kick off at the end of March.



WIN
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FOR FREE!



It's time to give you, dear readers, the opportunity to win some truly special soccer books — one from overseas and one from Australia.

The first one is *My World Is Round*, by Soccer legend Frank Farina. And guess what. The man himself has personally autographed the copy we are giving away!!

The book is brilliant, recounting the life and times of Farina, his national career and his club days, from Belgium to Italy's Serie A, and all in between. It's well-written and most entertaining. It is published by Vox Peritus.

We have one copy to give away.

Plus, the winner also receives a great Marconi poster with this book.

The second offering is *The Soccer Goalkeeping Handbook*. Superbly written by Alex Welsh, with a foreword by legendary ex-Arsenal keeper Bob Wilson, this English book is ideal for keepers of all ages. It is distributed by Lothian books at the rrp of \$55, and is available at all good bookstores.

We have three copies of this book to be given to our readers.

Both competitions are open till March 15. We will pull out the winners on that day and print the winners in the March 16 issue. Prizes are sent that week.

One envelope per competition. Put your name, address and phone number on the back. The address to send to is Soccer Weekly, 7 Gamers Ave, Marrickville, NSW 2204.

Mark your envelope either Frank Farina Book Competition, or Soccer Goalkeeping Book Competition. ONE ENVELOPE PER COMPETITION.

As a South Australian soccer spectator of long standing, it is very disappointing to see the decline in numbers attending games at Hindmarsh this season. Everyone is asking why there has been such a lack of interest.

Personally, I think the interest is still there, but there are big problems attracting people to a half finished stadium which is in the grip of security overkill and is basically uncomfortable and

Have Your Say...

unfriendly for the average spectator. It is no longer fun to go to the soccer at Hindmarsh.

Also, there are so many things happening in Adelaide every weekend, many of them free, that people are sampling a lot of other activities. Soccer cannot compete with Carols by Candlelight, the day/night cricket, the Tour Down Under cycle racing, numerous triathlons, Womadelaide...the list goes on.

And, of course, when it is hot, the beach. Especially over the Christmas holidays, people go to the beach and stay there till very late, or head off to Victor Harbour for a few weeks. Add to this the on-again off-again viability of the Adelaide Sharks, and the rumours surrounding this tragic saga, and many people just can't be bothered going to a Sharks game.

There is too much politics involved for the ordinary punter, and too many rumours. In a place the size of Adelaide, there are no rumours without at least some portion of truth, so if it is rumoured there won't be a game, why take a chance on going?

The battle between the Sharks and the SA Soccer Federation has left a bitter taste in many people's mouths. How can anyone deregister a club on the eve of its National Summer Youth team playing in a semi-final?

No one other than those directly involved will ever know the true story, but the general public feeling is that this one action has the

potential to destroy the future of soccer here. If our best young players are treated in such a manner, will they stick with the game? It has certainly damaged the Soccer Federation's image among the soccer public.

Back to the stadium. There is a lack of close parking and the comfort at Hindmarsh at the moment is minimal, so other activities are more attractive.

No one wants to sit on the Eastern side facing into the sun. Apart from the heat factor and being unable to see from the glare, unless you are in the first row by the fence, you cannot see the whole pitch — the stepping is not high enough from row to row.

Hopefully this will be fixed when everything is finished. There is also a drastic lack of toilet and catering facilities in the outer. Many people think this has been done deliberately to get everyone to pay the extra \$3 to get into the grandstand area, which is well supplied with food and drink outlets and toilets.

There is nowhere for the public to get a decent dinner. No sign of fruit, salad, sandwiches — anything healthy is out. Sticky drinks are also a nuisance — the entire grandstand is already sticky from spilled drinks.

Bottled water is available, but on one hot night this ran out. The best food (meat and salad rolls) is available from the Adelaide City bar, but if you don't pay to get into the grandstand, you can't access this.

This has also put a lot of people offside. With the old stadium, you could go into the Adelaide City bar for a drink and a chat before the game, as the doors were outside the paying area.

Now this is fenced off. Every week people are complaining that they don't want to watch the game from the stand, they just want to go in and have a drink.

The stadium in its current form is very divisive, and many people, having gone there once under such circumstances, haven't returned.

There have also been many suggestions about playing games late on Friday nights. Late night shopping finishes at 9pm, and suggestions are for 9.30pm kick-off. The younger fans could go to the soccer, and on to the nightclubs, while the older people can come along after their shopping.

However, there may be council regulations which mean the lights must be off by a certain time. Nobody knows.

Being kept in the dark is another problem for the average spectator. There is a huge lack of public information and promotion of the game here. If people don't know what's on, how can they attend?

As a spectator, I see the major problem being the use of Hindmarsh stadium while it is not finished. The Soccer Federation is always asking people to be supportive, but really, when it comes down to the basics, people have only so much time and money, and would prefer to spend it in comfort.

Let's hope when the stadium is finished, it will cater for everyone, and the crowds will come back.

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Australian News

HALL OF FAME HONOURS PIONEERS

By Bonnie Mersiades

Emotion ran high at the launch of the long-heralded Soccer Hall of Fame in Sydney on Sunday.

At a luncheon attended by some of this country's past great players and coaches, as well as administrators and other support staff, some of the pioneers of the code in Australia were honoured along with more recent greats.

Channel 7's Tracey Holmes was MC for the event, resplendent in hot pink, and welcomed around 300 guests to the Wentworth Hotel, which was also hosting a post-Mardi Gras party and a meeting of the Shooter's Party at the same time.

Fortunately, no-one appeared to end up at the wrong function.

The highlights of the Inaugural Hall of Fame ceremony included presentations to the Oldest Living Soccerero and the 1974 World Cup squad.



Gary Marocchi ... Award of Distinction

Soccer Australia did a good deed when they presented Mr James Osborne with an Australian playing shirt at last. At the time he played, players were not able to keep their playing shirts and Mr Osborne did not have a souvenir of having represented his country.

Mr Osborne, who was born in Newcastle (NSW) in 1908, made 450 first class appearances and scored more than 400 goals in his playing career.

He represented Australia in matches against New Zealand (1936), India (1938), Palestine (1939) and China (1941) and captained NSW against the English Amateurs in 1937, as well as touring New Caledonia (1933) and New Zealand (1936).

Touring English captain, Bernard Joy, rated Osborne amongst the best players he saw on the 1937 tour, and Osborne was made an offer from Newcastle United, only to decline in favour of staying at home.

He started playing as a striker in school and grade competition, until he was chosen to fill a position at left half which became his own from that time.

Mr Osborne, a sprightly 91 year old, was presented with a current Australian playing strip by Paul Wade and Rale Rasic.

The 1974 World Cup squad were presented on stage with certificates from English visitor (and subject of much recent media interest), Roy Hodgson.

Coach of the squad, Rale Rasic, spoke on behalf of the squad and talked of the close relationships between all involved in the heroic 1974 efforts. Rasic also spoke of the enormous pride in playing for, or being part of, the green and gold.

"This is the greatest sporting nation on earth, and being able to contribute to Australia through sport is a source of enormous pride for all of us," said Rasic.

He also paid special tribute to the late Jimmy McKay, who died from a heart attack in December last year, and Ray Baartz who was injured in a warm-up game against Uruguay, unable to participate in the World Cup finals and, indeed, unable ever to play again.

Looking fit and healthy, the audience couldn't help but be struck by the level of affection and camaraderie between the 1974 team mates. Unfortunately, Atti Abonyi was not able to

attend because of work commitments; and Peter Wilson, who captained the Soccereros in Germany, chooses not to attend such functions which is of enormous sadness to

his team mates and his many fans, as he is missing out on the public recognition he richly deserves.

Many of the other recipients included pioneers of the game in various forms, from both the playing and non-playing side.

Included amongst the recipients of the Hall of Fame's highest award was John William Fletcher, who is considered the 'father' of football in Australia.

Fletcher was a graduate of Oxford who migrated to Australia in 1875 at 28 years of age. He started advocating for the establishment of football in Sydney in 1877 and the first club was formed in 1880. He formed the first, and several other, clubs in Sydney and the Blue Mountains, as well as the NSW English FA — Australia's first soccer association — in 1882. He was a lawyer and magistrate until his retirement in 1914. He died in Sydney in 1918.

Another, more modern-day pioneer whose contributions were recognised, is Connie Selby who enjoyed a 14-year playing career. She was the first captain of the Australian Women's team when she was selected for the All Star team at the Women's World Tournament in Taiwan in 1978. She played ten matches for Australia, and has had numerous coaching positions with clubs, national teams and in Queensland and NSW.

While Aboriginal activist, Charles Perkins, is well-known for his love of, and regard for, football, the first Aboriginal person to play for the Soccereros was Harry Williams. Now 47 — but not looking a day over 35 — Williams toured Europe with the Soccereros in 1970, was a member of the 1974 World Cup squad, and played 43 games for Australia, including 20 full internationals. He

played with the fabled St George.

Another Medal of Excellence recipient, Ray Baartz, was responsible for the quote of the day

when he gave a message to all the young players currently overseas.

"Don't bow to pressure. There's nothing like playing for your country."

Baartz' passion and directness were met with warm applause from the audience, and his views were later echoed by current Under 20 and Under 17 coach, Les Scheinflug (a Roll of Honour recipient) who said he only wants players in his squad who value being there above all else.

With the inaugural Hall of Fame recipients now complete, Soccer Australia intends announcing



John Kosmina ... In the Hall of Champions

new inductees on a regular basis.

Soccer Australia Chairman, Basil Scarsella, said the next step was to look for a physical location for the Hall of Fame.

The Victorian Sports Minister, Tom Reynolds, who was present at the ceremony, was quick to offer Melbourne as a venue but with the Soccer Australia financial statements presented publicly on the same day, it is clear that the physical establishment of a Hall of Fame may be some way off, unless a benefactor is found.

The President of Soccer Australia, Neville Wran, QC, closed the function by saying that dealing with the future required people also to acknowledge and understand the past. He said that the Hall of Fame would help all involved in Australian soccer to make this link.

"Above all sports, soccer represents what Australia is all about. A large family from all walks of life working and living together in one nation, and making our way in this global game."



Manfred Schaefer ... Medal of Excellence

ABOUT THE AWARDS

There are three levels of awards within the Hall of Fame, for both on and off-the-field achievements.

The Hall of Champions/Hall of Honour is the highest recognition which can be given for a contribution to the growth and development of soccer in Australia. At this level, it is expected that recipients have made a significant contribution to the Australian community as a whole.

The Medal of Excellence/Roll of Honour recognises performance and contribution at a level far above and beyond what would normally be expected. Players who receive this award will have represented Australia on a significant number of occasions, while non-players will be recognised as having made a significant contribution to the sport at a national level.

The Award of Distinction/Roll of Honour is for outstanding service. Players will have represented Australia at least once, and non-players will have made an outstanding contribution at any level.

The full list of recipients within each category were:

Award of Distinction

Ron Adair, Jim Armstrong, William Coolahan, Col Curran, Michael de Bruyckere, Jack Evans, William Henderson, Tom Jack, Graham Jennings, Alan Johns, Gary Marocchi, Sergio Melta, Gordon Nunn, Jeff Oliver, Frank Parstons, John Perin, Ray Richards, Col Sanders, George Smith, John Watkiss

Roll of Honour

Fred Barlow, Donald Campbell, Tom Grinson, Harry Croft, Keith Gilmour,

Pam Gilbert, Tony Kovac, Brian LeFevre, Jack Logan, Peter Nickolich, Zoran Matic, Frank McIver, Graham McMillan, Des Miles, Martin Royal, Ron Smith, William Thomas, Joe Vlasits, Sir William Walkley, Ron Wright

Medal of Excellence

Charlie Yankos, John Nyskohus, Julie Dolan, Harry Williams, Manfred Schaefer, Jim McKay, Ray Baartz, Frank Loughran, Bob Lawrie, James McNabb, William Meunder.

Roll of Honour

Laurie Schwab, Connie Selby, Ian Brusasco, Frank Arok, Sam Papsavas, Eric Worthington, Les Scheinflug, Julius Re, Dr Brian Corrigan, Dieter Klose, Giacomo (Jim) Bayutti.

Hall of Champions

John Kosmina, Jimmy Rooney, Atti Abonyi, Peter Wilson, Johnny Warren, Ron Lord, Bob Bignell, Joe Marston, Reg Date, Alf Quill, James (Judy) Masters.

Hall of Honour

Elaine Watson, Tony Boskovic, Rale Rasic, Sir Arthur George, Michael Weinstein, Theo Marmaris, Vic Tyting, Robert Telfer, Harry Dockerty, Arthur Gibbs, John Walter Fletcher.

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Australian News

Minister ready to act over Leeds scandal

By Les Murray

The dreadful Jamie McMaster affair has brought to a head the unseemly trend of Australian players — and Australian-developed players — choosing, or being forced to choose to play for other countries.

The good news is that the specific problem triggered by McMaster turning out for England — that is the link between Leeds United and McMaster's Sydney school, Westfield Sports High — might be solved within days, at least before the NSW elections on March 27.

NSW education minister John Aquilina, a keen soccer fan with two soccer-playing sons, said on SBS Television's Toyota World Sports program last week that he will act to close any arrangement, official or unofficial, between the school and Leeds which in turn sees players developed through State funding end up playing for other countries.

The sordid story began with last year's row over Harry Kewell, another Westfield graduate, making himself available for Australia once too often for Leeds' liking. The club then made a policy decision, publicly uttered, that in future they will only sign Australian players with heritage which qualifies them for one of Britain's 'home' nations and who pledge allegiance to one of those nations.

In response there was alarm from Australian youth national coach Les Scheinflug and some heavy words, too, from former NSW coaching director David Lee who was instrumental in setting up the Westfield development program.

It was Lee who first revealed the link that exists between Leeds and Westfield, an arrangement which sees Westfield actively funneling young players towards Leeds.

He quoted as one example McMaster himself who, at one point, was trialling with Ipswich but was persuaded by Westfield school staff to head to Leeds instead.

In itself there is nothing wrong with that, but for the angle that Leeds is the only English club which wants players who are prepared to turn their backs on their country.

When SBS reporter Paul Williams began investigating the affair, Westfield school staff went running for cover. The school's principal refused to give SBS an interview.

When SBS exerted more pressure through the Department of Education, the principal did agree to an interview with department officials in tow to observe his every utterance.

Asked directly by Williams if there was an arrangement,



Mr Aquilina has vowed to break any agreement between Leeds and Westfields Sports High.

commercial or otherwise, between the school and Leeds, the principal three times refused to answer the question.

Even the department, assured by the school that there was 'no arrangement', at first backed away from the affair. And in a puzzling response Basil Scarsella, Soccer Australia chairman, said there was nothing his body could do about it.

One would have thought that, in the least, they could have jumped up and down and made the appropriate noises, persuading others to act.

Then, in an SBS interview, the chairman of Leeds United confirmed that indeed there was an arrangement, declining to spell out details without the school's consent. Later the club, now on the back foot over the bad publicity, attempted to offer an olive branch by inviting talks with Soccer Australia.

It was then that minister Aquilina made his pledge to use his power to dismantle any arrangement between Westfield and Leeds. We await the outcome.

Most disturbing in all this is that the signs of such a problem becoming magnified have been there for years. It was the Joe Simunic affair which first brought it to the surface.

The soccer media, including this columnist, was up in arms, demanding that SA fix the problem by signing contracts with young players, being educated at various institutions, which compels them to play for Australia and Australia only.

David Hill, then SA chairman, did utter some words of concurrence but pointed out that FIFA forbids contracts between players and national associations and only allows contracts between players and clubs.

Soccer Australia, evidently, then walked away, muttering something about restrict of trade and their inability to stop people playing for whomever they like. That Australian taxpayers' money was being wasted, and Australia's football development was being curtailed, didn't seem to worry them.

Yet a bit of creative management could have, and still can, solve the problem. One obvious solution is to simply have the various institutions registered as clubs.

The AIS for example should be so registered. That way contracts can exist between players and the Institute, with a clause compelling players that, at least for a quantified period after graduation, they cannot play for another country.

And then the AIS can further benefit by being able to charge compensation fees when the players it develops are plucked away by clubs who made no contribution to developing them.

Another point to observe is that the AIS is neither owned nor funded by Soccer Australia but, indirectly, by the federal Government which is not a member of FIFA. There is nothing to stop such contracts being made between the Institute and the players.

And I guarantee you, all young players, desperately keen to fashion a professional career in football, would sign it.



Leeds' Harry Kewell ... caught in the middle of the row.

STORRIE HAMMERS THE CREDIBILITY FACTOR

By Aidan Ormond

Peter Storrie had planned a relatively quiet trip to Australia. As Chief Executive and Director of Football at West Ham Football Club, he was here to run the rule over the club's youth development operations in both Sydney and Perth, and generally maintain the good level of contact the club has with its local counterparts.

Enter Leeds United. After the furore that club caused with its polemic decision regarding Australian players and their rights to play international football (Leeds want Aussie youngsters to turn out for a British Home country), Storrie has spent much of his media time in Australia having to defend his club's operations, particularly in light of uninformed comment that may have tarred his club with the Leeds experience.

"Let me say this clearly, we encourage players to play for Australia and any other nation," he said after watching Blacktown City youngsters play on Sunday.

"We do do it the right way. We don't take kids out of Institutes, we pay add ons, and very importantly we encourage the boys to play for Australia."

"I can imagine this situation with us being compared unfairly with Leeds is a rollover to do with Harry Kewell and the problems he had with his club v country situation."

"We talk to everyone, and by that I mean that we have had discussions with Soccer Australia, we want to work with them not against."

"My view is I would not want to jeopardise the long-term involvement of this association by doing anything that upsets the people here."



Stan Lazaridis ... West Ham hopes to find another gem like him.

"There are academies of football of 8-16 year old sides in Australia and they are taught to play the West Ham way, which encourages open attacking football."

And what is the long-term future of this plan?

"We have signed a new agreement till 2002, importantly though we are paying large amounts of money each year and we make nothing."

"What's in it for us is we may find a superstar of the likes of Stan Lazaridis."

And is this the sort of project that you would like to duplicate in other parts of the world?

"Yes, countries that are strong at Youth level, like Argentina, Scandinavia and of course Australia have to be looked at."

Don O'Regan, Blacktown City's Director of Football Operations and Director of its West Ham Academy (which runs in conjunction with its existing youth system) said that the investment directly in his club shows the commitment of West Ham and it "raises our profile and helps the game enormously."

So what does this say about the available talent in England?

"There are 92 clubs in England, and a number of other Premier clubs in London, and they are all trying to find the best youngsters. 'This is our way of looking at that situation."

"In Australia's case, the boys generally have an element of pace and strength and are fitness oriented, which is important in the Premier League."

"But back to our operations here, we have met with the federations and we say why not use us as a role model for this kind of youth development."

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Australian Features

KING KRESIMIR SPEAKS!

With Aidan Ormond

Soccer Weekly has officially anointed Kresimir Marusic as 'The King of Sydney Soccer'. He is currently heading our Player of the Year voting and is wowing crowds at North Sydney with his regal displays.

During a break in training 'The King' spoke to us about his career, a career that could still end up back in Europe.

Kresimir Marusic started his club career aged ten at legendary Croatian Club Dynamo Zagreb, where he played between the ages of 10-17.

"This was a most important part of my career because it was here that I really learnt the tactics and skill needed to play well. Infact, they prepared you directly to play first team football, that was how it was targeted.

"Zagreb had former players who taught me a lot and this was a great education. But I must say I never thought in a million years that I would end up in Australia."

At 17 Marusic moved to Ridnik in the Croatian first division, where he played for five years (also captaining the side).

Although he had a brief spell back in Croatia, much of his twenties has been spent in Australia, in this part of his career he calls "the middle years" (he is now 29).

He began with Melbourne Knights.

"For me I was a guest player at the club, but to be

honest, they did not take things very seriously which was disappointing. At training they would be joking around and because I was the only full-time player, it was difficult.

"I believe that you train the way you play.

"Mind you, about one hour before kick-off all players

changed and took on a very professional manner, and we of course did find success winning the Grand Final in Adelaide."

After Knights, his next move was Sydney United.

"One of the best teams I have ever played in. It was a joy to play in that side. Good coach and playing football was made enjoyable. I remember we used to pull big crowds away from home because the fans loved the way we played."

Yet the Grand Final was a major let down for all the players, and Marusic freely admits now that his pre-match comments may not have helped for that epic Final in 1996, in front of 42,000 at the Suncorp Stadium.

"Yes my comments, which went out on TV, saying that the Strikers really were not good enough probably stirred them up. Anyway, on the day they were the better side."

Next port of call for this talisman of success was Carlton, the newly formed franchise.

"I tell you, from day one I did not know what I was doing there. First, that cricket pitch at Optus Oval was a nightmare, it was terrible. I mean, how can you play good football on a pitch like that?"

"Having said that, it was good that it was a full-time set-up and we did achieve success. As for myself, I really struggled with a

groin injury that I just could not shake. It affected me for about 14 games."

However The King saved his most trenchant criticism for his coach at the time, Eddie Kneevic.

"You would have thought that a player of his stature, who had spent so many years at successful and big clubs in Europe would have more of an idea of how to pre-season training.

"Sure everyone says he is a great coach who has had success at his first go, but he can't fool me."

The King has spoken!

Now onto his current role, as playmaker at Northern Spirit.

"Aidan, let me first say this. Sydney is a beautiful place," he gushes.

"I've been to cities in Europe with great history and beauty but Sydney, it really is special, with the water views and all. Although Zagreb is my city, this is really beautiful.

"As for the club, it is such a pleasure to be playing for a club with such a great support base, 17-19,000 fans can really make a difference. We want to do it for the fans when we go out there. It makes you put in 110 per cent. We just love this club, its fans and the people running it.

"Arnie (Graham Arnold) has a difficult task trying to keep 20 first team players happy, but he does it well because he has the experience of playing at top clubs in Holland, a country that teaches you so much, I can see Holland was good for him.

"Plus we have so many quality players, which makes it a pleasure for me.

"Ian Crook for example. When I saw him I knew in the first two minutes that he was a quality player. He, and I really mean this, is one of the greatest ever players I have had on my team.

"Robbie Slater has done a great job, he is a big name and it's so good to see him back home.

"As a side we are starting to gell and despite the loss against Wolves, we can make the finals, par-



Kresimir Marusic ... playing with Sydney United was a joy. One of the best teams.



Kresimir Marusic ... playing with Sydney United was a joy. One of the best teams.

ticularly with the good players in the squad (Poric, Crook, Cranney are either back or coming soon).

And the future for Kresimir Marusic? He instantly answers in his passionate manner.

"I want to play for Australia, there is no doubt about it (he is eligible). You see, with my career I feel I am in the middle stage.

"I would like to have a good career in Europe in a country like France or Spain. That would make my career complete.

"Then I would like to come back to finish my career knowing that I really had achieved something. That would make it all complete. Then my children could continue growing up here and I could teach young players how to play the game properly, to use skill and tactics on top of their natural athleticism.

"Wherever I go, I will be available to play for Australia. I will come back whenever needed if I am overseas."

Outside of football, well, there is no outside. "I think about it and I am involved pretty much 24 hours a day, although I love being with my family (Chiara, Laura and Anita), and a bit of rap music I sometimes listen to."

For those who have not seen him in action, right now is a good time. The King is in fine form, and with his fellow artisans at Spirit, regal performances are the order of the day at the court of North Sydney.

Northern Spirit plays Adelaide City this Friday night. Kresimir has assured us he won't be wearing his robes!

The Independent: A Spirited Theatre

The thousands of soccer fans who make their way up Miller Street, North Sydney to the home of Northern Spirit, pass an elaborate looking building near the corner of Ridge Street, that has played a number of roles in North Sydney's colourful history.

This building housed the works for the cable trams that came up Miller Street from Blues Point, before the Bridge or the Tunnel were built. It was a variety theatre, a skating rink, but is mostly remembered as The Independent Theatre.

Last year, only a few months before the launch of the Northern Spirit, the Independent Theatre was re-opened after a major face-lift.

In coming months the Independent Theatre will present Graeme Bell's Jazz, The Mikado, Pygmalion, Othello, several plays for schools, regular corporate events, and later in the year the long-awaited and sure to be long-running, "Forever Plaid" a top night of top-of-the-fifties-pops.

This was also the venue for this week's King Kresimir front cover. Soccer Weekly thanks everyone at the theatre, particularly GM, John Derum.

This was the first time both Soccer Weekly and our photographers Melbin had seen this theatre, and it really impressed.

And King Kresimir, who really got into the Spirit (!) of things with his portrayal, gave it his Royal seal of approval, so it must be good!

The King also wanted to thank the Costume Shop for their assistance in the photo shoot.



Star Player and budding Shakespearean thespian ... Kresimir Marusic.

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Australian Features



Welcome Amigos. We are The Four Diegos Let's Samba, Let's Rumba, Let's La Bamba, Let's Salza down the Copacobana with sombreros on our head. Let's welcome Olyroo and Perth Glory young gun ... Michael Garcia



Diegos: "In the aftermath of a huge event in your life, the birth of your daughter Mia, you scored the goal that sealed Glory's 3-0 win at home against Carlton. The goal was a result of an inspirational run and strike by you. Do you credit your wife, who reportedly went well and truly into injury time when giving birth, as the motivation behind the goal?"

Garcia: "I'd have to say yes. It was a very special moment for me. The crowd reaction was fantastic, but having seen what my wife had to go through, performing that move was a piece of cake."

Diegos: "How do you think your daughter is going to cope with the middle name, 'Jonesy'?"

MAMMA MIA! GLORY'S NEW PRODIGAL SON

Danny, Gareth, Con, Vas, Bobby, Danny, Gavin, Nick, Chicken Treat, Diego Garcia when she grows up, and was it true that your wife rejected your first suggestion of a Christian name, Ronaldo?"

Garcia: "Unfortunately she didn't go with having the names of the whole Perth Glory squad on the birth certificate, even though I really tried hard to convince her. She struck the 'Ronaldo' option of the list because he's bald, and that's something Mia won't be for the whole of her life."

Diegos: "You are a member of the highly talented Olyroos squad. How are your preparations going and have you put your daughter to sleep as yet with a lullaby version of 'Advance Australia Fair'?"

Garcia: "The Olyroos are progressing very well, even though we've just come off a two game losing series against South Korea. I have been pretty happy with my own preparations and hopefully, I'll be there in the year 2000. The Aussie national anthem is a great little song to put my daughter to sleep. I just hope she doesn't fall asleep if I'm playing for the Olyroos at the Olympics."

Diegos: "You crossed over from Canberra Cosmos to Perth Glory this season. Some liken the move to going from hairy anchovies to top shelf caviar. Other than the obvious crowd size

the playing side of things, there is greater competition for places in the squad and the intensity on the park is far greater."

Diegos: "The team has recovered from that slump. What did coach Stange to help you cope?"

Garcia: "We are all a little bit disappointed with how we went just recently. We were trying to take it one game at a time and hopefully, turn things around with the aid of a little luck. Bernd, our coach, is pretty good. He just tries to help us maintain our focus and concentrate on the job at hand."

Diego: "Do you have a message to the fanatical Glory supporter out there in the stands?"

Garcia: "Stick with us. We'll see you at Subiaco in the finals."

Diegos: "Thanks Michael. You should think about the Diegos as Godparents. We're always available. Adios Amigo!"

Garcia: "Thanks Diegos. That's fine but remember that a bottle of Tequila as a present for her first birthday is not all that appropriate. Adios Amigos!"



Bernd Stange ... helps maintain Glory focus.



Glory salute ... finals matches in Perth this season will be at Subiaco Oval.

difference, what are the contrasting features of both clubs?"

Garcia: "The training, the full-time professionalism, organisation of the board and efficient administration are the major differences. On

PICTURED RIGHT IS ONE OF THE ERICSSON CUP'S MOST FEARED DEFENDERS. YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO GET IN A BLUE WITH THIS GUY. WHO IS IT? READ SOCCER WEEKLY NEXT WEEK. FOR THOSE WHO CAN GUESS, GO TO THE TOP OF FIRST YEAR SOCCER HISTORY.

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Australian Features



The Four Diegos continue their VW Combi Van tour of the world by dropping in on Soccerroo and Glasgow Rangers star ... Tony Vidmar



Diegos: "You are originally from Adelaide, the City of Churches, where you grew up playing a cultured, patient brand of football with the Zebras, under the thoughtful Zoran Matic."

understandable how these issues are more relevant to them."

Diegos: "There is a big chance that when the next Glasgow derby comes around that you may be

Aussie kiss?"

Vidmar: "I think it would be more appropriate and in keeping with the culture, to give him a Glasgow Kiss."

Diegos: "Rangers are streets ahead in the Scottish

Holland and Brazil have also been touted. Will Rangers release you for these games?"

Vidmar: "It really depends on when these games are scheduled. I've heard a little about the FIFA XI game in

FROM THE CITY OF CHURCHES TO GLASGOW HARD MAN!

You're now playing in Scotland where tough men drink a lot, wear kilts and every player seems to be a Bovril squilling, haggis-munching son of a coal-miner. It seems a cold harsh unforgiving environment to earn a living. How have you adjusted?

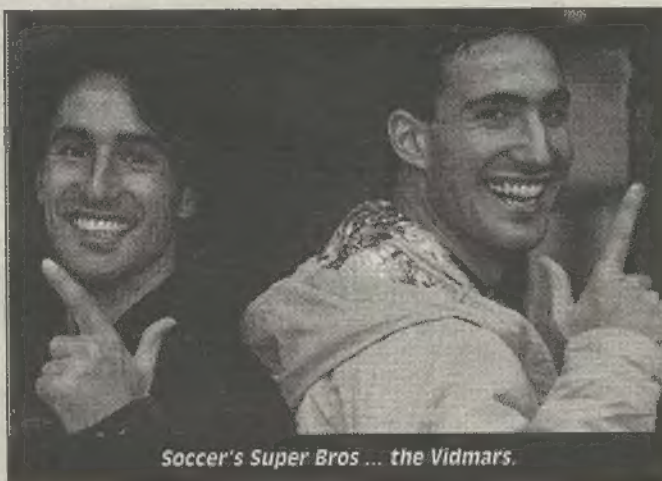
Vidmar: "It was a big change to come to Scotland. As you say the style of football is very different here. It does take time but after a while you get used to the lads and the people. I'm enjoying it very much at present."

Diegos: "You are one of the few Aussies who has played in a Glasgow derby between Rangers and Celtic and lived to tell the tale. They say that everything occurs at such a frenetic pace, that players don't remember much about the game. What was your experience of the occasion?"

Vidmar: "I think the whole build up really involves the supporters more than the players. The supporters from both sides are very parochial and fanatical about their team. The only thing that they care about is that you beat the opposition. The atmosphere itself is difficult to describe. You have to be at the game to comprehend what it's about."

Diegos: "The fervor behind the Rangers and Celtic clash has traditionally stemmed from the Catholic v Protestant sectarian religious rivalry over the years."

marking the Soccerroo V-Bomber, Mark Viduka. What has the fallout been like for Mark in Scotland since he



Soccer's Super Bros ... the Vidmars.

returned to Celtic? Given that you are Australian, has the club confiscated your passport and does the Rangers club doctor keep asking repeatedly whether you're feeling homesick, stressed and emotional?"

Vidmar: "They often shine a bright light in my face and ask how are you feeling Tony? I think that they are pretty convinced that I'm not going to go anywhere. I believe the press has been fairly good to Mark. They have

league once again. It looks like the club is going to bully its way to what seem like it's 475th Scottish title.

Is it hard to keep focused when the competition is so lopsided?"

Vidmar: "Not really. There are still 12 games to go. It's not over until the end of the season. We know that if we have a slip up Celtic will be there on our heels. Till it's mathematically out of Celtic's reach we will continue to work hard."

Diegos: "The Four Diegos Scottish correspondent, Jimmy Diego, tells us you scored against Hamilton Academicals in the Scottish FA Cup recently. It was your first goal for the club and no doubt a special moment for you. How did you celebrate the goal? Did you slip on a kilt and play an imaginary bagpipe around the corner flag to get into the Scottish groove of goal celebration?"

Vidmar: "Yes I actually slipped on the kilt for the occasion. I made sure the public got a glimpse of what is under an Aussie's kilt. I don't know whether they appreciated the sight though. It was my first goal for the club. It's been a long time coming. It came from a corner and I think the player marking me had little idea of what he was doing. It just hit me on the head and I was fortunate that it went in."

Diegos: "Out of the two Vidmar brothers the Diegos have always regarded Aurelio as the long-haired lair and you as the clean-cut sensible one. Your combination to score at the Sydney Football Stadium versus Argentina in the 1993 World Cup qualifier displayed a certain telepathic connection between the two of you. Do you share a special bond on the field?"

Vidmar: "I believe we do. Ever since we both started playing soccer at a young age in the backyard, we always had the goal that one-day we would play for the Soccerroos and play overseas. It's something we've grown up with. I suppose it's no great surprise that it's happened. There are many other sporting brothers in Australia who have been able to achieve the same thing in their chosen sport."

Diegos: "The Diegos have officially declared a bitter dislike for English Premier league club, Leeds United due to the pressure they are placing on the Aussie youngsters they are interested in, not to play for Australia. What's your view on their behaviour?"

Vidmar: "It is certainly an issue that has upset a lot of people in Australia. I think what is going on is wrong. Players brought up in Australia should be proud of their country and their culture. I can't believe that people outside Australia can place this sort of pressure on our young players. I hope that Soccer Australia can eventually do something about it."

Diegos: "Some big games have been proposed in 1999 for the Soccerroos. The World XI game in June is a definite and games against Croatia,

June. At that time it is our off season so I'll have to wait and see whether I'm selected."

"I heard that you four guys are in the front running for the first four spots though."

Diegos: "We are actually in the front running for the position of captain/coach of the Soccerroos."

"To be honest Tony, this is in fact, not an interview for 'Australian Soccer Weekly', but rather an interview for the Diegos to gauge whether your attitude is good enough to wear the Green and Gold and a Sombrero. Congratulations, so far you are passing the test."

Vidmar: "Oh I'm so glad. It would be the highlight of my career to play for a Soccerroos team coached by the Diegos."

The Four Diegos are radio celebrities and soccer scribes on Melbourne's Stereo 97.4 FM Saturday 10 am-12 mid day.

E-Mail 'The Diegos' on FourDiegos@bigpond.com

Until next time ...Adios Amigos!

Diegos: "Well done Tony. Flattery and a constant round of tequilas will get you everywhere."

"You've definitely made our preliminary squad of 75 players. See you in June. Adios Amigo."

Vidmar: "Thanks Diegos. I'm rapt I've made the squad of 75 players. What a privilege! Remember the first round is on me. Adios Diegos."



Vidmar playing for the Soccerroos in a friendly against Hungary. We won 3-1.

Did you witness any of this rivalry in the lead up to the game?"

Vidmar: "None at all amongst the players. We really don't think much of it. It is something that the supporters take notice of rather than the players. Both teams have such a long tradition, and there are many fans out there that have supported their club for a long time. It's

come to understand what his problem was. From all reports he has been working very hard in training. Knowing Mark, he would be itching to get out there as soon as possible to make his debut for Celtic."

Diegos: "When you do meet up with him on the park, what sort welcome will you give him — a tap on the heels, a cynical axing from behind or a good old

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SASI PIRATES TO TREASURE GRAND FINAL NUMBER THREE

SASI PIRATES 2
(Sharon Black 13m, 41m)
CANBERRA ECLIPSE 0

SASI Pirates are finally able to celebrate lifting the Ansett Australia Summer Series championship on their third attempt with last Sunday's impressive 2-0 grandfinal victory over premiers Canberra Eclipse at Ainslie Football Club in Canberra.

Two first-half goals from Matildas' midfielder and Pirates' captain Sharon Black was enough in the end for the South Australians to take the honours after heartbreaking losses in both previous season's grandfinals.

Canberra Eclipse finished top of the points ladder in the ten-round season, but for the season finale were without three of their six Matildas through injury — national league top goalscorer and four-hatrick hero Lisa Casagrande, sweeper Traci Bartlett, and fullback Amy Taylor.

It proved to be too great a hurdle to overcome, the Eclipse unable to reproduce their trademark attacking combinations.

SASI Pirates threatened from the opening whistle in what was a fast-paced contest, striker Kristy Moore running at the Eclipse defence to set the tone for the match. A 7th minute freekick to Canberra was swung around the wall but keeper Tracey Wheeler palmed the ball up and gathered it in. This was promptly followed by three Pirate strikes on goal and it seemed a goal was not far away.

In the first two seasons, SASI's Sharon Black became renowned for her uncanny ability to pop up at the right moment and notch up the winning goal or two.

This year, the midfielder became more of a quiet provider and creator, working hard for her teammates in the middle of the park and gaining less of the spotlight. But there could be no better a moment to rediscover

those shooting boots once more, and sure enough in the 13th minute the Pirates gained the lead.

The ball was fed into the danger area and despite several attempts was not dealt with cleanly by either side. Then a miscued clearance from the left saw the ball fly back across goal to set up the half chance for the visitors.

Black stretched to reach the loose ball 15 metres to the right of goal and her shot sailed over the keeper to bounce in off the far post.

Iannotta dribbled her way past several opponents to try and create an opportunity for Canberra Eclipse but the move broke down with the final pass.

This became the pattern for the Eclipse in the first half, or the long ball was used with too regular a frequency for the visitors' defence to gratefully gather up.

The Pirates continued to dominate and peppered the goal at every opportunity, denied on several occasions by the impressive performance of Eclipse goalkeeper Belinda Kitching. In the 37th minute, the hardworking Marie Spagnoletti won the ball in midfield and exchanged neatly with Black. Under pressure by a Canberra opponent, Black slipped a beautiful ball through for Moore whose drive from the right edge of the 18-yard was stopped in its tracks by a spectacular flying save by Kitching at the left post.

Two minutes later, a Kitching reflex save blocked a close range shot off a corner and the ensuing goalmouth scramble somehow ended with the ball not crossing the line.

But the Matilda number one was well beaten by Black's second goal in the 41st minute, a goal created from nothing.

Black's unexpected strike from an angle on the right corner of the 18-yard box flew into the top left corner of the net for a 2-0 lead at half-time, another fantastic goal of old.

After the break, SASI Pirates continued where they left off, prompting Canberra Eclipse to soon make some positional changes, pushing Peita-Claire Hepperlin forward into midfield.

This resulted in a determined fightback for much of the remaining second half. Substitute Kim Channing hit a rocket from the edge of the box, keeper Wheeler responding with a fine diving save in the 73rd minute.

Angela Iannotta was also unlucky not to put one away, Wheeler again keeping the two-goal lead intact.

SASI remained dangerous on the counterattack and Kitching's work in goal continued to keep the Eclipse in the game. A clever passing combination up the middle of the park freed Louisa Bisby in for a one-one-one with the keeper, Kitching winning the contest as she tipped the ball over the crossbar.

Canberra's Channing again came close with seven minutes remaining, before teammate Amy Wilson skied her effort from long range. In the end, the home side were unable to break through with a goal of their own, and the title went deservedly to the SASI Pirates.

"What a relief," said Pirates' Kevin McCormack of



Sharon Black (centre) ... two goal scorer in the final.

the long-awaited win, SASI coach in all three grandfinals. "The earlier disappointments makes this an even better win."

"Coming here made it all a bit tougher for us, as the Canberra crowd really helped them push forward in the second half.

It seems our team is able to pull through against the odds. Certainly what we've proved is that we're the most consistent team over the three years."

SASI Pirates: Tracey Wheeler, Dianne Alagich, Kristyn Swaffer, Kimberley Morris, Louisa Bisby, Marie Spagnoletti, Erin O'Shea, Sharon Black, Rebecca Morrison, Jessica Halfpenny, Kristy Moore.

Canberra Eclipse: Belinda Kitching, Peita-Claire Hepperlin, Sacha Wainwright, Nancy Foot, Cindy Doyle, Sarah Cooper, Amy Wilson, Danielle Hepperlin, Angela Iannotta, Dior Foxhill, Amy Kilpatrick.

SASI'S LONG ROAD TO GLORY

1996/97 (Inaugural season)

Grandfinal loss

QAS 2 (Lisa Dunne 23m, 82m) defeated SASI 1 (Kristy Moore 14m)

1997/98 Season

The Sunday grandfinal was SASI's third tough match in as many days, losing the Friday major semi-final 3-2 to NSWIS, then contesting the preliminary final on the Saturday, a 2-1 win over ITC Victoria to qualify for the grandfinal.

Grandfinal loss

NSWIS 3 (Julie Murray 17m, 45m, 95m) defeated SASI 2 (Sharon Black 16m, Kimberley Morris 77m) after golden goal extra-time

1998/99 Season

Championship Victory

SASI Pirates 2 (Sharon Black 13m, 41m) defeated Canberra Eclipse 0

MATILDAS OFF TO ALGARVE CUP

The Matildas depart the AIS this Saturday to contest their first ever Algarve Cup, rated as the third highest event on the international calendar behind only the Olympic Games and the World Cup because of the high calibre of team it attracts each year to coastal Portugal.

The Matildas will be based in the town of Albufeira with a week's preparation time before the 8-nation tournament commences.

Drawn in Group B alongside China, Denmark, and Portugal, the event will be a significant guide to Australia's World Cup prospects.

Sun 14 March

Gp A Finland v Norway
Gp A Sweden v USA
Gp B AUSTRALIA v Denmark
Gp B Portugal v China

Tue 16 March

Gp A Norway v Sweden
Gp A Finland v USA
Gp B Portugal v AUSTRALIA
Gp B China v Denmark

Thu 18 March

Gp A Norway v USA
Gp A Finland v Sweden
Gp B AUSTRALIA v China
Gp B Portugal v Denmark

Sat 20 March

4th Group A v 4th Group B
3rd Group A v 3rd Group B
2nd Group A v 2nd Group B
1st Group A v 1st Group B

HEPPERLIN'S DEBUT SELECTION

New OAP Squad member Peita-Claire Hepperlin is amongst National Coach Greg Brown's 18 member Australian Team for the Algarve Cup in Portugal, the defender/midfielder's debut selection into the Matildas side.

The 17-year-old born and bred in Canberra has impressed since the inaugural Ansett Summer Series season and obviously has earned her stripes since she commenced training with the AIS Squad in January.

Mature for her young age, Hepperlin has a sound understanding of the game. She is very cool under pressure, comfortable on the ball and has great vision and distribution.

Unavailable for selection through injury is key midfielder and Australia Cup player of the final Alison Forman.

The 29-year-old suffered a knee injury in Northern NSW Horizon's last Ansett Summer Series match and will be sidelined for eight weeks.

Traci BARTLETT
Sharon BLACK
Joanne BUTLAND
Lisa CASAGRANDE
Sarah COOPER
Alicia FERGUSON
Sonia GEGENHUBER
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI
Peita-Claire HEPPERLIN
Angela IANNOTTA
Belinda KITCHING
Julie MURRAY
Joanne PETERS
Kim REVELL
Cheryl SALISBURY
Bridgette STARR
Anissa TANN-DARBY
Shelley YOUNAN

ACT
SA
QLD
ACT
ACT
QLD
QLD
NSW
ACT
ACT
QLD
NSW
NSW
QLD
NNSW
NSW
NSW
NNSW

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

next round

Friday 5 March
Northern Spirit v Adelaide City
 North Sydney Oval
Saturday 6 March
Brisbane Strikers v Wollongong Wolves
 Suncorp Stadium
Sunday 7 March
Gippsland Falcons v Sydney Olympic
 Mobil Park
Sydney United v Melbourne Knights
 Edensor Park
Adelaide Sharks v Marconi Fairfield
 Hindmarsh Stadium
Monday 8 March
Canberra Cosmos v Carlton SC
 Bruce Stadium

Bye: Newcastle Breakers, and the South Melbourne v Perth Glory game is now played on 31 March (Wednesday night)

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

RESULTS ROUND 22

Newcastle Breakers	2
Adelaide Sharks	2
Brisbane Strikers	0
Melbourne Knights	0
Marconi Fairfield	5
Gippsland Falcons	1
Wollongong Wolves	3
Northern Spirit	2
Perth Glory	3
Canberra Cosmos	1
Sydney Olympic	1
South Melbourne	1
Carlton SC	1
Sydney United	3

Bye Adelaide City

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	21	13	5	3	40	22	44
Perth Glory	21	12	3	6	46	25	39
Sydney United	21	12	3	6	38	27	39
Sydney Olympic	21	10	5	6	37	26	35
Northern Spirit	21	11	2	8	29	29	35
Adelaide City	20	10	4	6	33	22	34
Carlton SC	21	9	4	8	42	32	31
Marconi Fairfield	20	9	3	8	36	37	30
Brisbane Strikers	20	8	5	7	29	31	29
Newcastle Breakers	21	7	6	8	21	28	27
Wollongong Wolves	20	6	6	8	32	37	24
Adelaide Sharks	20	5	6	9	29	33	21
Melbourne Knights	20	4	5	11	22	33	17
Gippsland Falcons	20	4	5	11	13	37	17
Canberra Cosmos	21	2	2	18	15	43	8





ERICSSON CUP

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STRIKERS NOW HAVE MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2-0
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS
At Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers have been left a daunting task to make the national league finals after Melbourne Knights escaped with a nil-all draw in their Suncorp Stadium clash on Saturday night.

The Knights, who are second bottom in the league used its "get out of jail free card" to avoid only their fourth loss to the Strikers in 16 meetings over the past eight seasons.

The Strikers, who were coming off two hidings to Perth Glory and Carlton, sat in the comfort zone for most of the match as the visitors struggled to put any real pressure on the former champions.

However, the Strikers were left lamenting several close calls they badly needed to grab three points to maintain the pressure on a Top Six playoff later in the season.

The Strikers now need to win five of their remaining eight games to be assured of making the play-offs.

The Strikers were again without skipper Glenn Gwynne and experienced defender Chris Zoricich, who was given a raw deal in his send off against

Carlton in their previous match.

Although the match had much riding on it from a Strikers viewpoint, the game failed to reach any great heights for the smallest crowd of the season at Suncorp Stadium.

The Strikers easily won the battle for ascendancy in midfield with Socceroo Kasey Wehrman back in his familiar role for his second successive match after a brief stint in the forwards.

Wehrman immediately struck up his usual understanding with Chay Hews, who is on the comeback trail and a horror run with injuries while man-of-the-match Nick Meredith caused havoc with his clever switch of plays and long range shots from left fullback.

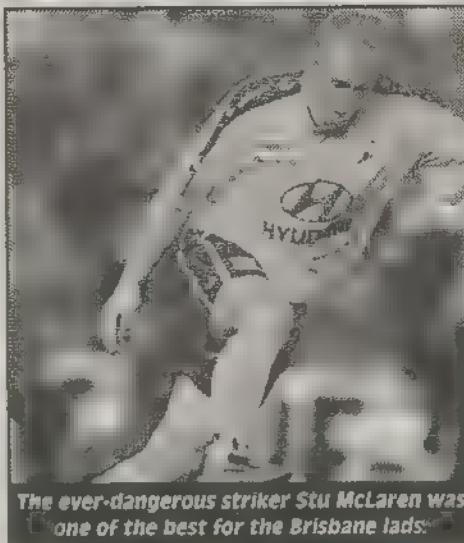
The homieside missed several golden opportunities to break the deadlock early in both halves.

After only six minutes, Meredith cut a ball back from the byline across an empty goalface with strikers Andy Harper and Stu McLaren arriving too late.

The Strikers best first half chance fell to defender Steve Laybutt whose header off a corner was tipped over the crossbar in a diving one-handed save by Knights' keeper Joe Didulica.

The Strikers kept up their relentless pressure after the break but were denied on several occasions by both Didulica and the woodwork.

McLaren, one of the Strikers finds of the season, snapped a difficult chance from 18 metres over the



The ever-dangerous striker Stu McLaren was one of the best for the Brisbane lads.

crossbar just five minutes after the resumption, while Des Hughes watched agonisingly as he drilled a low shot from 25 metres just past the upright.

Just four minutes after McLaren's earlier strike the robust forward headed a cross from rookie defender Andrew Davidson onto the crossbar.

Didulica again thwarted the Strikers to keep the Knights in the match midway through the second half, tipping a typical powerful Meredith thunderbolt onto the bar.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,510

Referee: Simon Micallef (Sydney)

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Bell, Laybutt, Harper (Tollenaere 76), Wehrman, McLaren, Hews, Harns, Meredith, Hughes (Knipe 82m), Davidson.

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Nastevski, Jolic, Kovacevic, Kelic, Kiratoglou, Susa (Trupkovic 84), Deak (Magdic 68), Rada (Rajher 74), Banini, Kutlesovski

Yellows

Strikers: Laybutt 29
Knights: Trupkovic 90

Votes for Player Of The Year:

3: Meredith
2: Didulica
1: McLaren

The visitors were not without their chances with midfielder Zeljko Susa blasting a 25 metre strike onto the crossbar deceiving keeper Clint Bolton.

In a tense final few minutes in which both sides went searching for the winner, the Strikers hit the upright yet again when Meredith struck a low free kick from outside the box with only two minutes remaining.

'BUGSY' HAT-TRICK OVERSHADOWED BY RED CARDS

MARCONI 5
Maloney 36, 62, 74, Phillips 57, Babic 82
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 1
Gannon 70
At Marconi Stadium, Geelong

By John Vrtaric

Brad Maloney scored the goals but referee Matthew Breeze almost stole at show as Marconi trounced Gippsland 5-1. Breeze provided the main highlights of the first half as he dished out five yellow cards and two red cards.

Maloney returned to his early season goal scoring form with a superb hat trick against the disappointing Gippsland Falcons on a cool and, at times, rainy Saturday night. Maloney's tally could have been even higher as he missed a penalty in injury time.

An uninspiring first half was brought to life in dramatic circumstances in the 27th minute with a lunging, stud infested tackle by Francis Awaritefe on Clayton Bell. Before referee Breeze could pull out the inevitable, and deserved, red card mayhem almost broke out as the Gippsland players descended upon the culprit.

Noted firebrand Claudio Canosa was the first on the scene and reached Awaritefe just as he stood up — Canosa stood toe to toe with Awaritefe and appeared to push him two handed as other players swarmed around the pair.

Breeze quickly issued Awaritefe with a red card that Awaritefe protested with such fervour that he had to be dragged away from the referee by teammates. Awaritefe showed enormous reluctance to depart the field and even his coach, Frank Farina, had to intervene.

Canosa was soon shown the red card as well and protested with the same vehemence and disbelief as his counterpart. Thankfully sanity was restored soon after and the game proceeded.

The sending offs were foreshadowed with three bookings in the first sixteen minutes in what had not been a rough game. Referee Breeze provided the main highlights of the first half with his one-man card show. Thankfully, the second half was more noted for goals scored and remained card free.

There were few other highlights in the first half but Gippsland did have a goal scoring opportunity in the 18th minute. A free kick reached the head of Marko Perinovic, who headed across the goal to Brian MacNicol who headed back towards the centre of the goal from where Canosa headed over the bar.

A similar cross from Clayton Bell in the 34th minute gave Perinovic space for a powerful header that was well saved by Ante Covic.

Marconi forced a couple of half chances before they opened the scoring in the 36th minute. A move down the left saw Brendan Renaud release the ball to Marcus Phillips who in turn relayed it towards Darren McDonald striding forward on the right side of Gippsland's penalty box.

McDonald took a couple of strides and released a strong grass hugging shot towards the keeper's right post. Bojo Jevdjovic, the Gippsland 'keeper, could only parry it into the path of the alert Brad Maloney who slid towards the ball and steered it into the net for the opening goal.

Another couple of half chances, one to each side, concluded what was a rather uneventful last twenty minutes of the first half.

Marconi began the second half in lively fashion and seemed to be playing with an extra man as Gippsland was founding wanting for numbers during Marconi counter attacks.

Pan Keun Kim best exemplified this with a penalty box to penalty box attack when he broke up a Gippsland attack and countered against a retreating defence concluding with a strong shot which went straight to the 'keeper.

In the 57th minute a corner from the right produced Marconi's second goal.

Renaud played it short to Phillips on the edge of the penalty box — hefeinted past one defender and rifled in a low left foot shot that sneaked in inside the near post.

Two minutes later a cross from Renaud ventured towards two unmarked Marconi players in the middle of the Gippsland penalty area. Maloney was first to it and back-headed it over Jevdjovic only to see it bounce off the bar and out of danger.

In the 62nd minute Maloney put the match beyond the reach of the Falcons. A Renaud run down the left, where he beat two defenders, delivered the ball inside



Bugsy Maloney inspired the Marconi rout with a treble.

to Sean Babic who skilfully beat his marker, Jeff Hopkins, and threaded a perfectly placed through ball past the last defender to his captain, Maloney. The skipper took the ball in his stride and calmly slotted it powerfully past Jevdjovic for a convincing 3-0 lead.

A complacent Marconi allowed the visitors to pull a goal back in the 70th minute. Gippsland sweeper, Levant Osman, found himself with space on the left just outside Marconi's penalty box and proceeded to dribble past two defenders and coolly stroke the ball past Covic just inside his left post.

The three-goal cushion was quickly restored when two minutes later a Gippsland attack was broken up with the ball ending up at the feet of Phillips. He immediately counter attacked and took the ball all the way up to the opposite penalty box where he released the ball with perfect timing to Maloney. A first time quality strike produced Maloney's hat trick and a 4-1 lead to Marconi.

In the 81st minute a thunderous shot by Darren McDonald cannoned off the post before Babic got a

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,122

Referee: M. Breeze

Marconi: Covic, Gibson, Farrah (Hooker 77), Kim, Care (Zoric 65), Renaud, Maloney, Phillips, McDonald, Babic (Trajanovski 83), Awaritefe.

Gippsland: Jevdjovic, Hopkins, Canosa, Osman, Savage (Becvinovski 66), Hutchinson, Bell, Hastie, Pucc (Vargas 71), MacNicol, Perinovic.

Red Cards:

Marconi: Awaritefe 27
Gippsland: Canosa 27

Yellow Cards:

Marconi: Care 16, Farrah 33, Babic 41.
Gippsland: Savage 3, Hastie 10.

Votes for Player Of The Year:

3: Maloney(Marconi)
2: Babic(Marconi)
1: Phillips(Marconi)

well deserved goal a minute later. A short pass from Phillips to Babic left him one-on-one with Hopkins and he again adroitly beat his opponent and headed towards Jevdjovic. His finishing was clinical as he easily beat the 'keeper and post the final score line.

A penalty, after a foul on Trajanovski, in the sixth minute of injury time gave Maloney the opportunity for his fourth goal that he spurned when Jevdjovic made a good save to his left.

Marconi's welcome victory was due to the great finishing of Maloney and the quality supply and creativity of Babic and Phillips. Renaud had a good attacking game but was exposed on a number of occasions in defence with his lack of match play clearly affecting his stamina.

Gippsland had few players worthy of mention although Willie Hastie was instrumental in some early good moves and tried hard throughout the match.



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EDWARDS STARS IN THE HEAT

PERTH GLORY

DESPOTOVSKI 1, EDWARDS 15, DE

CANBERRA COSMOS

DE JESUS 78

At Perth Oval, Perth

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory managed to remain in second place on the Ericsson Cup standings following a hard fought 3-1 victory over bottom side Canberra Cosmos at a sunbaked Perth Oval last Sunday.

After four consecutive losses in January, Glory have now bounced back with four straight wins to be sitting equal second with Sydney United, five points behind minor premier favourites South Melbourne who drew with Sydney Olympic.

As if the sweltering conditions weren't bad enough, the game itself was spoiled by an ordinary display from

South Australian referee Sam Hasic who is in his first year on the NSL referees' panel.

It is believed Hasic's performance was the reason Glory Bernd Stange overlooked the post-match interview session, for fear of saying something he shouldn't.

Alistair Edwards, who scored two classic second-half goals, did show himself for interviews although he too declined to answer any questions of a controversial nature.

"Neither side was able to play to their full potential today because of the heat," said Edwards. "I've played in humid conditions in South-East Asia, but never played in anything like this. The sooner this State gets a purpose-built stadium for our football code, the sooner we can play under lights," Edwards said.

It was a game that looked anything else but a win to the home side, although Cosmos showed great resolve for much of the 90 minutes. Captain Gordon Hunter, Amanda Miglietti and Gabriel Gonzalez were all solid contributors.

Bobby Despotovski netted his seventh goal of the

season in the seventh minute, after some quality offensive play that finished with the talented striker heading accurately over the Canberra goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic from eight metres.

The tall custodian reason why Glory could only hit the opponents net three times, following a string of superb reflex saves.

Glory had to wait until the 75th minute before increasing their lead, when wing-back Rob Trajkovski centred off the right to the head of Edwards who guided the ball home just inside the far post.

Ivo De Jesus pulled a goal back for the visitors three minutes later when he converted a penalty that was awarded when defender Jamie Hamwell was adjudged to have bundled over substitute Michael Musitano.

The noise from most of the 12,072 supporters gave a clear indication about their opinion of the spot-kick decision. The Glory can consider themselves fortunate that a penalty was not awarded four minutes earlier when goalkeeper Anthony Franken charged at Nick Purdue who was sent goalbound.

Edwards restored Glory's two goal advantage four minutes before the final whistle when he directed a 20 metre free-kick to the exact spot as his previous goal.

The Perth club now have a fortnight's rest since next weeks away clash at South Melbourne has been postponed until Wednesday 31st March.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 12,072

Referee: Sam Hasic

Perth Glory: Franken, Trajkovski, Miller, Ciraci, Hamwell, Deane, Strudwick (Naven 65), Garcia, Edwards, Despotovski (Kalogeracos 80), Boutrianis (Halpin 79).

Canberra Cosmos: Knezevic, Popovich (Burt 46), Wilson, Martina, Gajan (Magnacca 74), Miglietti, Roberts, De Jesus, Gonzalez (Musitano 62), Purdue, Hunter.

Yellows:

Perth Glory: Edwards 31, Hamwell 78
Canberra Cosmos: Hunter 55, De Jesus 58, Musitano 72

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Edwards (PG)
2: Ciraci (PG)
1: Knezevic (CC)

ALL ABOARD THE CHIPPS EXPRESS

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

Surjan 9, 11, 51

NORTHERN SPIRIT

Slater 22, Bingley 66

At Blundell Park, Wollongong

By Ashley Hyne

Bus drivers normally know the best way to get there. Just ask Wollongong hero Scott Chipperfield.

Local public transit man 'Chipp's gave a five star performance when steering his side to a well-deserved 3-2 victory over a frustrated Northern Spirit just as the season enters the final straight.

Coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has accepted fate on whether the Reds can still make the play-offs (they are 11 points shy with eight games left) but was happy nevertheless with the performance, especially that of Chipperfield.

His hold over Rudan was a key feature of the game, and from his two early crosses the Wolves could well

have been two up inside the first 10 minutes.

With the Nigerian World Youth tournament in mind, the Spirit can ill-afford Rudan's excesses right now and the space he showed Chipperfield was more than enough for the home boy to shine.

Masi mistimed his run for 'Chipp's' cross after five minutes, and Surjan leapt high to head past Henderson for the first goal after 10.

Two minutes later Surjan doubled his season's tally and made Spirit pay for some sloppy clearance work when he cracked one from fully 25 metres.

Chipp's ceaseless running at the end of the game pinned back a late charge from the Spirit in a finish which, ironically, could have gone either way.

In the last few minutes he purposefully ran possession into Spirit's half, four Spirit defenders in close attendance, unable to get at the ball.

This was just as well for the home side. Inspired by Crook's substitution for Zane, Spirit looked ominously like snatching that equaliser.

At that stage 3-1 down Spirit looked dead and buried. Up to that point they were speculative at best.

Suddenly with Crook on the field, motivating and prompting, Spirit started grabbing the space in the

middle of the park and began attacking further up the field.

From one such attack Rudan, in acres of space, gifted Slater. Pogliacomi blocked the shot. Bingley rifled home the rebound.

But this game was over before Spirit really got into it. The only respite for Spirit was because of Slater using the blind side well to unhinge the home defence. Nick Theo was solid in his praise: "Should definitely be playing for Australia," he said of Slater.

Slater's tough challenge on Pogliacomi could have been a turning point but Spirit were seldom able to test him, beating him just once in the first half thanks to some finesse.

Langdon's return to Marusic from the corner, wrong-footed the Wolves defence coming out and Slater leaping balletically over the stranded keeper headed into the empty onion bag. Langdon's effectiveness is a cultured commodity. Inconsistent with the long ball, incisive with the short pass.

If Spirit did deserve a point it was through Bilokapic's efforts in quelling Masi, the Fijian, whose enthusiasm put paid to most of the chances he had.

But there he was a constant thorn in Spirit's side, playing a quick one two with Surjan just after the restart which gave Surjan just enough room to advance and whack the ball past Henderson for his hat-trick goal and the winner.

Local hero Surjan was chuffed afterwards: "Yeah, I'm happy. The coach has allowed me to play behind the

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 5,679

Referee: B Hugo

Wollongong Wolves: Pogliacomi, Souris, Stanton, Horsley, Brooks, Surjan, Chipperfield, Spencer, Huxley (Langan 90), Mas, Karavatakis 75, Reid (Dimoski 78).

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Enes, Arnold, Rudan, Casserly, Marusic, Bilokapic, Langdon (Cunco 65), Slater, Zane (Crook 55), Bingley

Yellows:

Wollongong Wolves: Spencer 47

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Chipperfield (WW)
2: Slater (NS)
1: Crook (NS)

forwards and it's giving me a lot more room to operate. Horsley and Chipp's are supporting well and the defence is solid so we feel good right now."

Not surprising given that the Wolves have a good coach and bus driver these days.

BREAKERS BATTLE FOR DRAW

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

Buonavoglia 35, Haythornthwaite 88

ADELAIDE SHARKS

Artone 59, Castro 74

At Breakers Stadium, Newcastle

By Soccer Weekly

Newcastle Breakers are still in with a chance of making the six. Sadly for them the underrated Adelaide Sharks proved a thorn in their side.

Newcastle Breakers after dominating the first half and leading 1-0 at the break had to come from behind to salvage a point in a 2-2 draw.

Young Mark Wilson played a defence splitting ball through in the 39th minute to the deadly John Buonavoglia, who rounded the Sharks keeper Nathan Wildy slotting into an empty net with his now customary aplomb.

The rain did make the ground a little heavy and this may have contributed to the dearth of quality play.

Nevertheless the second stanza was completely different with the Sharks equaliser 14 minutes into the second half through Corey

Artone from a set piece from 20 yards out. His curling free kick was a beauty, with Bob Catlin helpless.

Slack defence 15 minutes later in the 74th minute saw Derek Poirer carry the ball close to goal line on the left with his close range shot parried by Catlin.

Ex-Cosmos player Alex Castro picked up the rebound and smashed it home through a crowded defence to give the Sharks the lead in what looked a possible victory for the 13th placed Sharks.

But these days it is much harder to defeat the Breakers, especially with John Buonavoglia in the home attack.

He provided Haythornthwaite with a fine pass in the 88th minute after he wriggled clear of a few defenders, with the midfielder striking first time to level the scores.

The crowd figure was 3,204 which was disappointing considering the fine weather on Friday despite heavy rain on Wednesday and Thursday.

Breakers officials said later that they were disappointed that they could not pull off a win but in the end a draw was probably a fair result.



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,204

Referee: E Brazzale

Newcastle Breakers: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, Owens, McGuire, Bauer, Sanderson, McMans, Ritchie, Wilson, Buonavoglia, Umlil, Wiecezorek, Haythornthwaite.

Adelaide Sharks: Not available.

Yellows:

Newcastle Breakers:
Haythornthwaite 56, Pryce 59, Artone 89

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Buonavoglia (NB)
2: Poirer (AS)
1: Haythornthwaite (NB)

To make the top six the Breakers have to win at least six games. It is not out of the question, but it will be a hard task.

Look out for our very special John Buonavoglia issue coming soon.



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ZORBAS THE GREAT!

UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
Tome 14
SOUTH MELBOURNE 0
Tsekis 34
At Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic's fighting display last Sunday night, managed not only to contain current League champions South Melbourne to a 1-1 draw at the Belmore Sports Ground, but also lift themselves three places into fourth spot on the League ladder.

Despite Olympic's fury in attack, galvanised by quick shut downs in the middle of the pitch, one was left suspiciously not convinced that the cool champions were just containing themselves, interested only in avoiding

defeat.

In fact the champions never got out of first gear, concentrating only in absorbing all of Olympic's mobile efforts.

Striker Norman Tome drew first blood for Olympic in the 14th minute when he luckily skewed a Pablo Cardozo corner fired in from the left which captain Peter Tsekis had cleverly dummied the passage on the first post.

But Souths should have equalised in the 33rd minute through midfielder Robbie Liparoti. Liparoti from close range and on the left, fired on target only to see his powerful drive ever-so well blocked by Tsekis on the first post.

Eleven minutes from the break the League champions hit the target.

Following a well taken corner, the ball fell to stocky striker Jimmy Tsekis on the left corner of the box. A well balanced Tsekis unleashed a lobbing shot at the target that ricocheted in off the under side of the

horizontal.

One of Olympic's tactical ploys was to somehow try and harness Souths' Paul Trimbohl. Coach Branko Culina entrusted this unenviable task to rookie midfielder-tracker, teenager Peter Zorbas. This the lad did very well.

Four minutes after the break referee Eddie Lennie awarded Olympic a very soft penalty as Souths' powerful central marker Nick Orlic robustly shoulder charged midfielder Jason Culina well off his feet and inside the box.

Although the League's talented top goalscorer Pablo Cardozo sent Michael Petkovic the wrong way with his delicately chipped effort, the ball clipped the cross-bar and stayed out. Justice had prevailed for such a soft penalty.

Souths in the 54th minute strongly threatened, as experienced striker John Anastasiadis busted into the clear to latch onto a brilliant through-ball from Steve Panopoulos. But a fabulous covering tackle by Olympic's flying defender Scotty Baillie, clipped the ball well out of harm's way.

Olympic stormed Souths' lines in the last 15 minutes greatly inspired by the mobility and crossings of fresh substitute Carlos Gonzalez. But although the home side showed great desperation to hit a frantic winner, the

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 6,845

Referee: E. Lennie

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoutsos, Baillie, Durakovic, Blagojevic, Augerinos (Gonzalez 69), Zorbas (Jomaa 82), Tsekis, Thomas, Culina, Tome (Juric 71), Cardozo

South Melbourne: M. Petkovic, Orlic, Iosifidis, Coveny, Panopoulos, Goutzioulis (Polak 67), De Amicis, Anastasiadis (Curgija 71), Trimbohl, Tsekis.

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Zorbas (Olympic)
2: De Amicis (Souths)
1: M. Petkovic (Souths)

current champions defiantly stood firm, especially with goalkeeper Michael Petkovic excelling in comfortably gathering in all crosses and high balls fired into his area.

CARLTON DAYZED BY PUMAS

CARLTON 1
Tricarico 48
SYDNEY UNITED 0
Day 7, 46 Plesa 44
At Optus Oval, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Carlton's final game at Optus Oval brought with it a 1-3 defeat at the hands of a ten man Sydney United side.

United fully deserved their victory against a Carlton outfit that played without passion.

Their win was even greater considering that the send off of Ante Moric in the 55th minute left them with only ten players for good sized period of the game.

But on a day when the sale of the Carlton Soccer Club was announced, the Blues were not their best and now have a lot of work to do if they are to make the top six.

Coach Eddie Krncevic, although bitterly disappointed with his side's display, still believes the Blues can make the six.

"We haven't ruled out our chances" he said. "We've got to get three points this week against Canberra and then, hopefully, another three in the

derby game against South Melbourne."

David Mitchell seems to have no such troubles. His team is equal second and if they play for the remainder of the regular season as they did on Sunday, they could well grab a spot in the top two and the double chance.

"I'll be happy to get second spot. It's not unrealistic to say that we can catch South Melbourne at the top, but I can't see them dropping that many points" Mitchell said.

"Today, it was important for us to bounce back after a couple of losses in a row, it was a tremendous win."

Nathan Day gave United the lead after just seven minutes when a rolled pass from Steve Berry found its way through the Carlton defence.

Day took the ball in his stride and slotted the ball past Carlton 'keeper Adrian Cagali.

Carlton came back hard and had a couple of half decent opportunities to square the ledger. Andrew Marth forced Mike Gibson into a good save and the United 'keeper had little trouble dealing with Alex Moreira's free header.

But they fell further behind just a minute from the half-time break to a superbly crafted United goal.

Marcus Stergiopoulos, who was getting forward in search of the equaliser, had a shot that cannoned off a United defender.

The ball rebounded all the way down over the half-

way line where Griffiths collected it. He crossed into the centre, Ante Moric stepped over the ball and following in was Richard Plesa who drove it into the corner.

Worse was to come for the Blues at the start of the second half. Just a minute in, Berry found Day in space on the edge of the area who got around on to his right foot to to curl the ball in off the post.

Carlton did respond quickly though with a goal from Joe Tricarico, his first since round 11 when he scored against Marconi. Con Anthopoulos took the ball to the bye-line and cut it back for Tricarico to find the net and give the Blues a glimmer of hope.

Their hopes were given something of a boost when United were reduced to ten men. Moric, booked in the first half for a foul on Anthopoulos, re-offended in the 55th minute when he clattered into Marth.

That was the signal for Carlton to throw everything they had at United, but found former Soccerroo Gibson was in sparkling form.

Some of Carlton's finishing was wayward, particularly Archie Thompson and Tricarico at crucial stages when they needed to have the shot on target.

Thompson did get one on target in the 84th minute, only to have brilliantly tipped over by Gibson.

Krncevic had no arguments with the result.

"They (Sydney United) deserved to win. They were hungrier than us and closed us down quickly."

"I was pretty disappointed with the way we started, mistakes cost us goals, silly mistakes, ones we've been punished for."

Although he wouldn't name names, it is obvious that Krncevic is not happy with some players in the squad.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,144

Referee: Mark Shield

Carlton SC: Cagali, Anthopoulos, Stergiopoulos (Deila Rocca 71), Douglas, Marth, Bresciano (Oulians 89), Moreira, Lapsansky, Thompson, Tricarico, Cervinski (Grbac 76).

Sydney United: Gibson, Barrett, Kupresak, Plesa, Vrkic, Bennett, Ardono, Berry, Moric, Griffiths, Day (Townsend 65 - Saad 90).

Yellows:

Carlton: Marth (14), Anthopoulos (63), Lapsansky (76)
Sydney United: Monic (33), Vrkic (80)

Reds:

Sydney United: Moric (55)

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Gibson (SU)
2: Berry (SU)
1: Barrett (SU)

"Certain players need to put their hands up, I want players who will put their bodies on the line. Today was, without doubt, our worst performance in the 18 months we've been in the league."

EMO BACK IN FORM FOR BLUES

CANBERRA COSMOS 0
UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
Tome 21
At Bruce Stadium, Canberra
(Round 21 game)

By Nick Guoth

Sydney Olympic came away from Canberra 1-0 winners in a match which was somewhat one-sided for most of its term.

Brett Emerton showed why he will most likely be one of the first picked by Les Scheinflug for the Under 20 Championships in Nigeria. He dominated the midfield, set up numerous chances and basically scored the goal.

The game started very slowly with neither side playing well. A number of wrong options together with strong tackling barely saw the ball out of midfield. Of the two teams it was Olympic who emerged from the slumber first.

Although they were exerting pressure, Olympic resorted to long shots but most of them did not find the target. On the odd occasion Emerton or Jason Culina was able to get the ball into the area, the accomplished

Canberra defence cleared with ease.

Canberra came out much better in the second half. An Ivo DeJesus freekick found Peter Buljan but his header went agonising wide. Then somewhat against the run of play, Emerton rounded Paul Roberts on the right and carried the ball into the box. His cross was a bullet and deflected off Norman Tome's head for the score.

The locals tried to get back into the game but Olympic secured their defence and snuffed out any possible chances. Scott Thomas and Milan Blagojevic were both playing well, the former making a number of runs upfield into attack.

In the last 15 minutes, Olympic should have sewed up the match. Pablo Cardozo was left free on the edge of the box. He turned and shot, and although it beat Vilson Knezevic in goal, it bounced back off the upright.

Then it became the Amarildo Miglietti show when on two occasions he cleared off the line with first Tome and then Cardozo closing in to apply the finishing touch. Knezevic was also not without honour as he saved two one-on-ones, the first from Emerton and the second from Tome.

Canberra with only seconds remaining had one final chance to snatch a draw with a free kick from outside the box. The ball unfortunately beat everyone when only



Brett Emerton... Man of the Match

a touch was needed to guide it in.

Olympic coach, Branko Culina was pleased with the three points stating that Canberra had improved since the 5-0 thrashing they received at Belmore. He also said he played Tome only because Norman always scores in Canberra.

Tom Sermann on the other side said he had "no complaints at all. We defended very well. I thought it was the best we've played at home."

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Approx. 1,500

Referee: M. Breeze

Canberra Cosmos: Knezevic, Popovich, Wilson (Musitano 72), Zelic (Magnacca 68), Marcina, Buljan, Miglietti, Roberts, DeJesus, Gonzales, Hunter.

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoutsos, Thomas, Tsekis, Tome (Juric 83), Culina, Cardozo, Emerton, Augerinos (Zorbas 70), Baillie, Durakovic, Blagojevic.

Yellows:

Canberra Cosmos: Zelic (33), Roberts (37), Hunter (57)
Sydney Olympic: Emerton (26), Cardozo (34), Augerinos (45)

Votes Player of the Year:

3: B. Emerton (SO)
2: A. Miglietti (CC)
1: S. Thomas (SO)

National Youth League

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SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round 22

Albury Wodonga	2	Gippsland Falcons	6
Carlton	2	VIS	2
Melbourne Knights	2	South Melbourne	1

Bye v Bulleen Inter

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	18	11	3	4	32	17	36
Carlton	16	10	3	3	45	19	33
VIS	16	8	4	4	32	26	28
Melbourne Knights	17	7	3	7	31	32	24
Gippsland Falcons	17	7	2	8	30	28	23
Bulleen Inter Kings	14	5	2	7	19	24	17
Albury Wodonga	16	0	1	15	16	59	1

ROUND 23

Saturday 6 March

Bulleen v Melbourne Knights,
(Anderson Park, 4 pm)
Albury Wodonga v Carlton,
(Myrtleford, 6 pm)
Gippsland Falcons v Bye

Wednesday 31 March

South Melbourne v VIS,
(Bob Jane Stadium, 5pm)

Southern Summary ...Carlton and the VIS played a thrilling two-all draw at Optus Oval, with the home team's equaliser coming in injury time.

In the first half the VIS was dominant with strikers Scott McDonald and Angelo Moutsopoulos on fire. It took all the skills of Dean Anastasiadis to keep them at bay until the 23rd minute when McDonald fired in a shot which the keeper could only parry and David Terek put the rebound past him.

Juan Sastre's run took him to the bye-line in 36 minutes and his cross was finished off by Moutsopoulos. The keeper made two stops in succession to deny the strikers before Sastre hit the third chance over the bar.

The second half saw a transformation as Carlton came storming back, giving a run to five of the Academy players who had won the Powerade Youth League Grand Final the day before.

Ace Stojcevski fired a free kick through the wall and past Martin John in 85 minutes, then deep into injury time Alex Josifovski scored from a suspiciously offside position from a cross by Steve Martin.

Albury Wodonga led Gippsland Falcons by two-nil early in their clash at Myrtleford, but the valley boys hit back with six goals, three in each half. Damien Cassar got two of them, brother Ben one, and the others came from Tony Pardo, Michael Katz and Denis Mustac.

Melbourne Knights beat South Melbourne by two goals to one in a tight, high quality match at Knights Stadium. Lance Plunkett opened for the Knights after forty minutes, but it was not till 80 minutes that Hrvoje Matkovic, one of the stars of the future, scored Knights' second.

Three minutes later Mustafa Mustafa converted a penalty kick for the Blues to set up a grandstand finish, but the home team held on.

LEADING SOUTHERN SCORERS

Andrew Mashoian	South Meib	15
Scott McDonald	VIS	8
Tony Diliaris	Carlton	7
Erhan Bayraktar	South Meib	7

New South Wales Institute of Sport's Simon Catanzaro decided the away game with Queensland Academy with the seventh goal in 87 minutes after the teams had been locked at three-all from just after half-time.

Dylan McAllister scored first for the Institute on the half-hour, and Sean Cranney equalised six minutes later. Russell Miner then put QAS ahead in 40 only for Tony Doumanis to make it two-all in 42.

Shane Smeltz's goal in 45 was cancelled out again by Doumanis and it seemed that there would be no further change until Catanzaro popped up with his fourteenth of the season.

The AIS beat Sydney United by five goals to one in Canberra. Elias Demourtzidis took his tally to twelve by completing his hat-trick and Kevo Gulesseria scored twice for the AIS. Steven Jordan scored for United.

Marconi Fairfield struggled to a one-nil over Northern Spirit Colts, which had chances to draw or even win the game. Luke Tomich got the only goal on the half-hour. Todd Macrae up front, keeper Chris Sharpe and midfielder Nathan Foti were superb for the Colts.

Northern Spirit gained a fine two-one away win over Wollongong Wolves. Ray Younis scored for the Wolves, and Adam Griffiths and Gabriel Mendez for the winner.

Sydney Olympic took nine goals without reply from its Academy team. Adrian Cervinski did the damage with four, and the rest were spread around individuals, Lee Miot, John Kyrzopoulos, Josef Corrente, Leo Carle and Anthony D'Apuzzo.

Matches scheduled for this week will be rearranged including the Round 17 game between Sydney United and Marconi, and the Round 22 game at Newcastle against Wollongong Colts.

No details of the Sydney United Colts match against ACTAS were available at time of writing.

NORTHERN DIVISION

Round 21

Monday 22 February

ACTAS	0	Sydney Olympic	4
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Round 17

Sydney United v Marconi Fairfield
(To be rearranged)

Round 22

Newcastle Breakers v Wollongong Wolves Colts
(To be rearranged)

QAS	3	NSWIS	4
AIS	5	Sydney United	1
Sydney United Colts	?	ACTAS	?
Marconi Fairfield	1	Northern Spirit Colts	0
Wollongong Wolves	1	Northern Spirit	2
Sydney Olympic	9	Sydney Olympic Academy	0

Bye v Marconi Fairfield Colts

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	21	15	5	1	73	14	50
Sydney Olympic	20	14	2	4	61	20	44
Newcastle Breakers	20	13	4	3	45	19	43
NSWIS	19	12	3	4	46	18	39
Marconi Fairfield	17	11	5	1	56	12	38
Northern Spirit	20	12	2	6	34	21	38
QAS	19	11	1	7	53	29	34
Wollongong Wolves	19	10	2	7	49	24	32
Sydney United	20	8	4	8	38	32	28
Marconi Fairfield Colts	19	5	4	10	19	33	19
ACTAS	20	4	3	13	29	51	15
Sydney United Colts	18	4	0	14	18	55	12
Northern Spirit Colts	19	2	3	14	17	77	9
Sydney Olympic Academy	20	1	3	16	13	77	6
Wollongong Wolves Colts	19	1	3	15	13	82	6

Round 23

Saturday 6 March

Northern Spirit Colts v Sydney Olympic,
(Christie Park, 5pm)
Northern Spirit v Marconi Fairfield Colts,
(Cromer Park, 4pm)
QAS v Wollongong Wolves,
(SunCorp Stadium, 4:30 pm)
Sydney United v NSWIS, (Edensor Park, 5 pm)
Wollongong Wolves Colts v Marconi Fairfield,
(Brandon Park No 2, 4 pm)

Sunday 7 March

Sydney Olympic Academy v Sydney United Colts,
(Wentworth Park, 5 pm)
Newcastle Breakers v Bye

Monday 8 March

ACTAS v AIS,
(Bruce Stadium, 4:30 pm)

LEADING NORTHERN SCORERS

Mark Hagger	Marconi	16
Daniel Kukucka	Sydney United	14
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	14
Kevo Gulesserian	AIS	14
Elias Demourtzidis	AIS	12
Russell Miner	QAS	11

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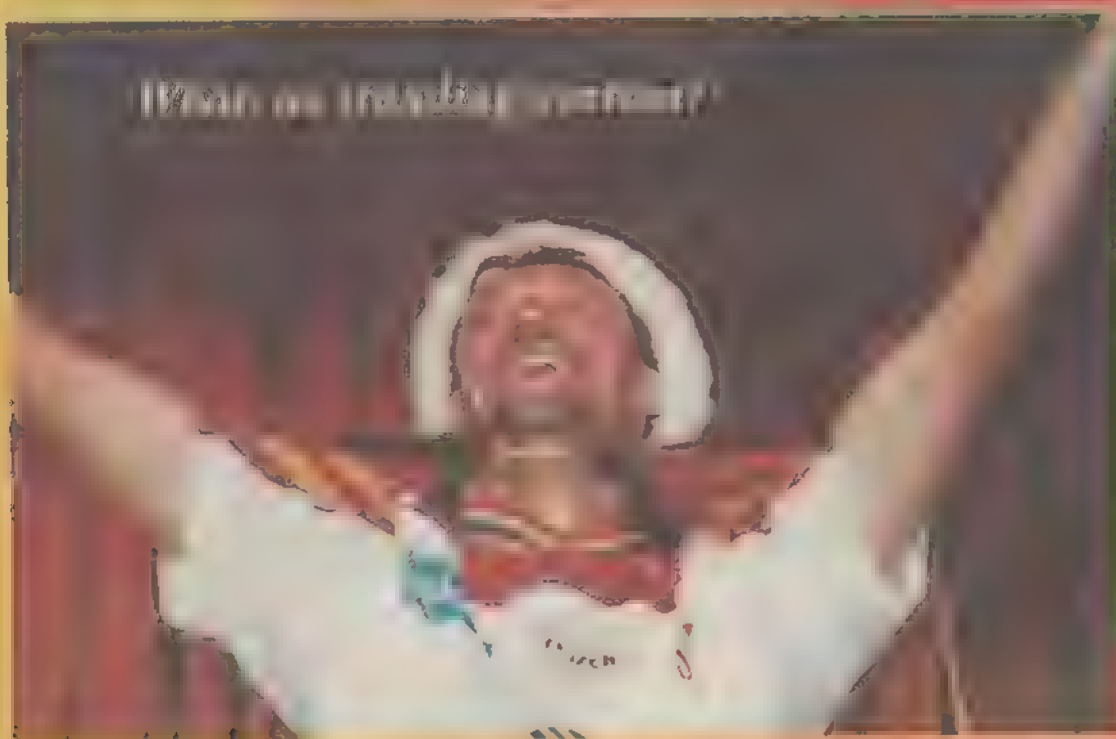
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wilst walketh away
with ye olde
Ericsson Cup
finale*



NSW SUPER LEAGUE

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND



FIVE

Saturday 6th March

Fairfield Bulls v Parramatta Eagles

Ninevah Field, 6:00pm

Bonnyrigg White Eagles v Macarthur Rams

Serbian Centre, 6:00pm

Sutherland Sharks v Ryde City

Seymour Shaw Park, 7:00pm

Sunday 7th March

Bankstown City Lions v Eastern Suburbs

Jensen Park, 5:00pm

Leichhardt Tigers v Central Coast

Lambert Park, 5:00pm

Canterbury Marrickville vs Blacktown City Demons

Henson Park, 6:00pm

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SUPER LEAGUE

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Macarthur Rams	3	3	0	0	10	5	5	9
Blacktown City D	3	2	0	1	6	3	3	6
Bankstown City L	3	2	0	1	9	8	1	6
Canterbury M'ville	3	1	2	0	8	4	4	5
Bonnyrigg WE	3	1	1	1	8	8	0	4
Fairfield Bulls	3	1	1	1	6	6	0	4
Leichhardt Tigers	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Central Coast	3	1	1	1	5	7	-2	4
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	3	5	-2	4
Ryde City	3	0	1	2	4	7	-3	1
Eastern Suburbs	3	0	1	2	3	6	-3	1
Sutherland Sharks	3	0	1	2	2	5	-3	1

UNDER 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Macarthur Rams	3	3	0	0	8	1	7	9
Bonnyrigg WE	3	3	0	0	7	0	7	9
Blacktown City D	3	2	0	1	7	4	3	6
Fairfield Bulls	3	2	0	1	4	2	2	6
Eastern Suburbs	3	2	0	1	5	4	1	6

Canterbury M'ville	3	1	1	1	5	4	1	4
Central Coast	3	1	1	1	5	5	0	4
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Sutherland Sharks	3	1	0	2	2	6	-4	3
Leichhardt Tigers	3	0	1	2	4	8	-4	1
Ryde City	3	0	0	3	3	7	-4	0
Bankstown City Lions	3	0	0	3	0	8	-8	0

UNDER 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Canterbury M'ville	3	3	0	0	12	5	7	9
Bankstown City Lions	3	2	0	1	9	5	4	6
Macarthur Rams	3	2	0	1	5	2	3	6
Ryde City	3	2	0	1	5	4	1	6
Leichhardt Tigers	3	2	0	1	3	3	0	6
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	4
Blacktown City D	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Bonnyrigg WE	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Central Coast	3	1	0	2	5	6	-1	3
Sutherland Sharks	3	1	0	2	3	8	-5	3
Eastern Suburbs	3	0	1	2	4	6	-2	1
Fairfield Bulls	3	0	0	3	1	8	-7	0

★ PLEASE NOTE THESE TABLES ARE FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK, WE WERE NOT SUPPLIED WITH THE CURRENT ONES IN FULL.

COASTIES SHOCK BLACKTOWN AT GABBIE

By Soccer Weekly

BLACKTOWN CITY0
CENTRAL COAST1

Blacktown City surrendered their 100 per cent home record to a very determined Central Coast, going down 1-0 at the Gabbie Stadium last Saturday evening.

As is often the case at the Gabbie, the Demons enjoyed plenty of territorial advantage but in this instance were unable to convert their majority of possession into any telling blows.

For their part the Coasties generally looked calm and collected at the back and were mostly able to neutralise the Blacktown three-man strike force of Bennett, Cleary and Angelucci. When they were able to penetrate the Coast defence the very experienced Gary Meier in goal was able to deal with any danger.

Nathan Byrn, at times the solitary Central Coast striker, was inspirational up front, continually able to hold the ball until his reinforcements arrived. He achieved just reward for his efforts two minutes into the second half after receiving the ball from Norman on the far post, steadying himself before blasting the ball past the exposed Fernando Greco in the Demons goal.

Content to soak up the pressure the Coasties were frequently dangerous on the counter-attack, particularly the speedy Sontag foraging down the left.

The effervescent Steve Cutler in the Demons' midfield was often in the action, keen to impress against his old club. He had many excellent runs down the right wing but unfortunately his telling crosses were not converted into goals.

Strong games from Paul Yates, Matthew Lowe and captain Damien Foxe were not enough to prise the points away from a composed Central Coast and the longer the game went on the more comfortable the Coasties looked.

Demons' coach Brian Brown was somewhat dejected after the match, "we had most of the play without any real penetration" he lamented.

"We failed to create any meaningful chances and didn't apply

any real pressure to Meier in the Coasties goal. Our boys must learn to apply themselves for the whole of the game and move the ball quicker. We'll address these areas at training on Tuesday."

The Demons' U/18s had a comfortable 3-1 victory with goals from Tsioumas, Bardsley and Osborne and the Reserves drew 2-2, Jactett and McLaughlin the scorers.

Blacktown City travel to Henson Park this Sunday to take on Canterbury Marrickville, at 6pm. Central Coast are also on duty this Sunday taking on Leichhardt Tigers at Lambert Park at 5pm.

Blacktown City Demons: Greco, Lowe, Brown (Bradley 80), Foxe, Sermanni, Yates, Holst (Riches 54), Cutler, Bennett, Angelucci, Cleary (Jactett 60).

*On top of Super League this week is Macarthur on 10 points, then Leichhardt on 7 together with Bonnyrigg. At the bottom Sutherland is on one point, second bottom is Easts also on one and third is Ryde with two points.

In other news, the West Ham United Chief Executive and Director of Football, Peter Storie, has been in Sydney this week to run his eye over the West Ham Academy of Youth Football.

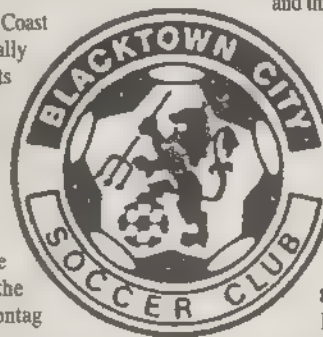
The academy is run in conjunction with the Blacktown City youth programme and Peter has been delighted with the development of the participating players since the scheme was inaugurated last season.

He will be flying on to Western Australia this week to check out the other academy in Perth.

He is also diffusing any potential negative comments flowing on from the Leeds debacle whereby Leeds have stated that any Australian boys on their books will be dissuaded from playing for their country.

Storie pointed out that not only have they been trying to get their Australian U/19 striker, Richard Garcia, selected in the Young Socceroos, they last month also released fellow Aussie, Steve Laurie, to attend a training camp here. Not only were they happy for him to attend but they also underwrote the costs involved, a move which saved the cash strapped Soccer Australia many thousands of dollars.

Now that's commitment.




NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE Results

Round



Four

BLACKTOWN CITY	0	CENTRAL COAST	1
MACARTHUR RAMS	1	RYDE CITY	1
SUTHERLAND SHARKS	1	LEICHHARDT TIGERS	5
FAIRFIELD BULLS	2	CANTERBURY M/VILLE	1
EASTERN SUBURBS	1	BONNYRIGG WE	4
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	1	BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS	0

eat well  live well

PREMIER LEAGUE



CAVALIERS' LAZARUS-LIKE COMEBACK IN ALTONA

ALTONA EAST 1
GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS 4

By John Rigas

High-rollers Green Gully Cavaliers came back from the dead to outclass Altona East 4-2 at Paisley Park on Sunday.

Altona outplayed Green Gully in the opening half hour, racing to a 2-0 lead.

It came as no surprise when new signing Billy Petrovski volleyed home a Paul Donnelly cross in the 13th minute.

East's striker Nick Papadopoulos extended his teams lead in the 26th minute via the penalty spot after Gully's Zdravko Atanasovski had handled the ball.

Gully stepped up a gear and pulled a goal back two minutes before the half time break through lively striker Daniel Genovesi.

Altona made a half-time substitution with injured goalkeeper John Chalamandaras being replaced by John Kantzidis.

Kantzidis faced a barrage in the second stanza and to make things worse for the home side, Donnelly was given his marching orders moments in after picking up a second booking.



The Cavaliers equalised in the 63rd minute when a powerful strike by John Dimitrelos struck an upright. Zlatko Donev followed up to score from the rebound.

Gully hit the lead in the 81st minute through flanker Nick Papadopoulos from an easy tap in.

Substitute Tony Neceski rounded off the scoring right at the death.

Phoenix: Chalamandaras (Kantzidis), R. Antoniadis, Salpingidis, Kapulica, De Amicis, Donnelly (sent off), T. Antoniadis, Bartol, Groidis, Papadopoulos (Verikakis), Petrovski (Xydias).

Cavaliers: Vella, Atanasovski (Dimitrelos), Azzopardi, Suric (Svigos), Mangos, Markovski, Papadopoulos, Georgiadis, Vassallo, Genovesi, Donev (Neceski).

Referee: Senko Rastocic

Votes: 3- Papadopoulos (GG), 2- Genovesi (GG), 1- Kapulica (AE)

PRESTON LIONS 3
MELBOURNE RAIDERS 1

By George Koukaris

A big crowd packed in to Goodyear Stadium for the clash between the two big guns of the northern suburbs in which Preston Lions defeated Melbourne Raiders 3-1.

Preston's win was remarkable considering they ended it with just nine players.

Preston dominated the opening 30 minutes but their fans watched in horror as midfielder Pece Stojceviski was issued with his second caution and red card by referee Alan Contin after what seemed to be a minor collision.

Kamer Simsek skimmed the crossbar just before half time, but with only ten men, the Lions realised the task ahead of them was not going to be easy.

Josip Kozic was brought on in the 55th minute to add potency in the centre. The move paid off five

minutes later when Chris Emovski slotted a shot past Raiders 'keeper Robert Manzella.

The Raiders took just 20 seconds to equalise when George Joleviski switched to the incoming Nick Cuculevski to blast home.

Warren Spink was causing havoc for the Raiders before the Lions suffered another set-back when Kosta Smirnis was sent off for a foul on Les Anastasiou.

The Lions defied the odds and in the 84th minute, defender Anton Kovacic immortalised himself when he headed home from a Spink free kick.

Kozic became the hero of the day when, in the 87th minute, he scored after a brilliant solo run to seal one of the Lions most triumphant wins in years.

Lions: Acevski, Kovacic (Talevski), Lisolajski, Ognenovski, Simsek, Spink, Stojceviski (sent off), Markovski (Kozic), Burlak (Graham), Emovski, Smirnis (sent off)

Raiders: Manzella, Boschini, Anastasiou, Nedanovski (El Kersh), Angelovski, Kitanovski, Joleviski (Grganovic), Slifkas, Iacovitti (De Propertis), Cuculevski, Gasparini.

Referee: Alan Contin

Votes: 3- Spink (PL), 2- Smirnis (PL), 1- Kozic (PL)

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 1
ST ALBANS SAINTS 1

By Chris Elysee

Ten man St Albans Saints held out for a 1-1 draw against a very unlucky Port Melbourne Sharks to salvage a point in a game that looked lost.

After the sending off of Saints 'keeper Marjan Vunderl, Port dictated play. However, they were unable to attain maximum points, kept out by a determined and stringent Saints back-line.

After a slow 20 minutes, the game picked up when Saints striker Kon Sianidis was stretchered off after injuring his knee.

A 25 metre shot from Greg Saric was tipped to the side by Sharks 'keeper Jamie Cooper as St Albans wrested the territorial advantage away from Port.

A superb strike from Ivan Razov somehow managed to stay out after Cooper was beaten, rattling the crossbar. The Sharks also came close with a free kick from Peter Kakos hitting the bar and a Nick Tsaltas shot brilliantly saved after great lead-up work by Alex Jackson and Kakos.

The turning point of the game came when Vunderl was given his marching orders after using abusive language towards assistant referee John Harvey after an incident involving Damian Vojtek and John Pappas up-field in the 44th minute.

A restructured Saints back-line coped well with immense pressure from the Sharks, with Tsaltas once again going close.

A goal from Elvis Heath was disallowed for offside as St Albans started to look vulnerable.

This was resolved when Razov started a run through midfield, took on three Port defenders and shot to the right hand side of the 'keeper to give the Saints the lead in the 74th minute.

After this, the urgency in Port's game increased with George Tsirtis' shot hitting the left post after a clever knock-down by Kakos.

Port's reward for their persistence came in the 81st minute when Dean Fak headed a Jimmy Latinopolous cross over substitute 'keeper Steven Pavlovic to equalise.

The Sharks continued to dominate proceedings, but unfortunately they couldn't break St Albans' resolute defence.

Sharks: Cooper, Knezevic, Pappas, Latinopolous, Vargas, Heath (Efstathiou), Kakos, Tsaltas, Tsirtis, Fak, Jackson (Palatsides)

Saints: Vunderl (sent off), Raspudic, Karl, Dragicevic, Movric (Pavlovic), K. Razov, Clarica, Sianidis (Bacak), Vojtek, Saric (Vidakovic), I. Razov.

Referee: Peter Ralevski

Votes: 3- Tsaltas (PM), 2- Tsirtis (PM), 1- I. Razov (StA).

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

SPRINGVALE WHITE
SOUTH DANDENONG 0

By Milan Ninovic

Springvale White Eagles recorded their first victory of the season on Saturday, beating South Dandenong 2-0.

For security reasons, the match was played behind closed doors at Fawknor's Smith Reserve.

The White Eagles, with only one point to show for their previous four games, were good value for their win and took the lead in the 18th minute.

Dejan Mlinar's long ball found Zlatko Mihajlovic whose shot on the turn was blocked by South Dandy 'keeper Chris Roche but Igor Mandic was on the spot to force the loose ball in.

Just six minutes later Springvale doubled their

advantage.

A superb cross from Eric Styczen landed perfectly for Sasa Nikolic who fired a magnificent volley past Roche from the edge of the area.

It was all one-way traffic though South Dandy midfielder Nick van Egmond had three good chances, two of them forced White Eagles 'keeper Robert Brian to make good saves from.

White Eagles: Brian, Calomino, Armour (Milenkovic), Cohadzic, Culibrk, Z. Mihajlovic, Nikolic, Styczen (M. Mihajlovic), Mlinar, Mandic (Bezbradica), Gacovski.

South: Roche, Mason, Tarevski, Moodie, Memeti, Pelja (Muriqi), Van Egmond, Villani, Feehan (Zekirija), Mucay, Katouik (Mezensof).

Referee: Gerry Connolly

Votes: 3- Cohadzic (SWE), 2- Z. Mihajlovic (SWE), 1- Van Egmond (SD).

BENTLEIGH BOUNCES BACK

BENTLEIGH GREENS 2
FAWKNER BLUES 0

By Soccer Weekly

Bentleigh Greens bounced back from a disappointing loss last Monday night to defeat an understrength Fawkner Blues 2-0 on Sunday.

The Greens had lead 2-0 against Green Gully last Monday only to be beaten 3-2 but on Sunday, they turned it around to beat Fawkner in style.

The Blues though, did have four regulars missing from their line up.

Out were Ivan Duzel, Paul Ferrante, Peter Bordignon and John Grimaud.

Stelios Drakos gave the Greens the lead a minute before half time.

Before that, Fawkner's Marco Di Sauro had struck the crossbar.

John Papettas extended Bentleigh's advantage four minutes into the second half, ending a solo run with a shot past Maurice Gonzalez.

The Blues had some chances in the dying minutes but Bentleigh were far too superior and were well worth the three points.

Greens: Clarke, Kourkoutzelos, Micheil, McDonagh, Constantinou, Drakos, Pino, Karapatsos (Kalimeris), Grella, Nilo, Papettas (Kotsovolos).

Blues: Gonzalez, Tramontana, Di Sauro (Cardillo), Alexopoulos (Vazzocchi), Schipano, V. Ferrante, Collins, De Santis, Simsek, Murphy (Sterjovski), Emmanuele.

Referee: Rick Artun

Votes: 3- Karapatsos (BG), 2- McDonagh (BG), 1- Papettas (BG).

eat well  live well

ROUND 4 DETAILS

Green Gully Cavaliers 3 (Donev 2, Vassallo) - Bentleigh Greens 2 (Drakos, Pino)
Votes: 3- Donev (GG), 2- Papettas (BG), 1- Vassallo (GG)

ROUND 5

Springvale White Eagles 2 (Mandic, Nikolic) - South Dandenong 0
Bentleigh Greens 2 (Papettas, Drakos) - Fawkner Blues 0
Altona East 2 (Petrovski, Papadopoulos) - Green Gully Cavaliers 4 (Genovesi, Donev, Papadopoulos, Neceski)
Preston Lions 3 (Emovski, Kovacic, Kozic) - Melbourne Raiders 1 (Cuculevski)
Port Melbourne Sharks 1 (Fak) - St Albans Saints 1 (I. Razov)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Melbourne Sharks	5	4	1	0	16	3	13
Green Gully Cavaliers	5	4	1	0	14	9	13
Bentleigh Greens	5	3	1	1	13	4	10
Preston Lions	5	3	0	2	10	5	9
Bulleen Inter Kings	4	2	2	0	8	4	8
Melbourne Raiders	5	2	2	1	9	6	8
St Albans Saints	5	2	1	2	6	9	7
Altona East	5	2	0	3	6	12	6
South Dandenong	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Fawkner Blues	5	1	1	3	8	9	4
Springvale White Eagles	5	1	1	3	5	7	4
Sunshine Georgies	4	1	0	3	3	8	3
Westvale	4	0	2	2	5	12	2
Altona Magic	4	0	0	4	1	15	0

ROUND 6 FIXTURES

Saturday March 6

South Dandenong v Bentleigh Greens - kick off 5pm at George Andrews Reserve
Melbourne Raiders v Port Melbourne Sharks - kick off 8pm at Epping Soccer Stadium

Sunday March 7

Sunshine Georgies v Springvale White Eagles - kick off 5pm at Chaplin Reserve
Altona Magic v Westvale - kick off 7pm at Paisley Park

St Albans Saints v Bulleen Inter Kings - kick off 5pm at Churchill Reserve
Fawkner Blues v Altona East - kick off 5pm at Smith Reserve

Monday March 8

Green Gully Cavaliers v Preston Lions -
kick off 8pm at Green Gully Reserve



SW GLOBAL GAME SPONSORED BY THE FOUR DIEGOS RADIO SHOW AND COAST FM SOCCER IN ADELAIDE

The game that never was... Bergkamp playing in the English Cup 'replay' against Sheff Utd



The brilliant Juninho playing in the Spanish Primera.



Kluysers of Barcelona against Valencia, Europe pages are on 25, 26



Boca fans watch their heroes train while the strike is on. News from the Americas is on page 21.



Newcastle's Brady and Blackburn's Dario Marcolin. UK Premier and the UK news starts on page 27.



Notice anything strange? Two kits control this game. The Corica inscription in Napoli Italy's Serie A is on page 24



AMERICAS

Soccer Weekly

The United States caught up twice to a surging Costa Rican team to draw 2-2 in the opening match of the Group A CONCACAF under-17 soccer qualifiers in Jamaica on Wednesday.

Marvin Calvo opened the scoring for Costa Rica in the tenth minute after he was impeded in the penalty area by goalkeeper Devlin Countess.

Fifteen minutes later, Seth Trembley put the Americans on equal terms.

But ten minutes before the interval, Costa Rica took the lead for a second time when a cross from the left side eluded a casual Countess for Fabricio Mena to score from close range.

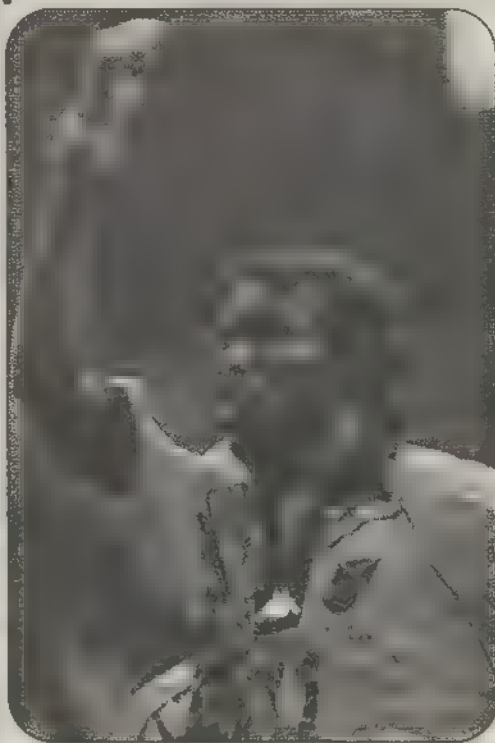
The Americans took control of the game in the second half, creating several scoring opportunities. They had a chance to draw level in the 77th minute but substitute Raul Rivera's header went just wide of the target.

Striker Langdon Donovan, who recently signed with German first division team Bayer Leverkusen, ensured the United States came away with a point seven minutes from the end, sliding in to score from a scramble in front of the goal.

The United States missed a chance to win the match on the stroke of full-time when central defender Oguchi Onyewu shot wide of an empty goal.

Costa Rica and the United States are the two favorites in the tournament.

I know the football-loving people of Montego Bay and its environs will come out in their numbers and support the Under-17s in their quest to reach the final of the Junior World Cup. "There are some very talented players on the side and I see no reason why they should not be in New Zealand where the final phase of the tournament will be played" said Jamaica's national team coach.



SUIT YOU! CHILEAN TAILORS CELEBRATE FASHIONABLE EDICT!

One thing Soccer Weekly has always moaned about is the fashions among managers of Chile.

Well, some good news! Chilean club coaches have been told they must wear a suit when they stand on the touchline during matches, it was reported here Tuesday.

A jacket, shirt, trousers and tie are required, according to the National Association of Clubs — a move that may meet with some resistance from a profession that has not been known in the past for its sartorial elegance.

Traditionally tracksuits, or other more casual clothing, have been the order of the day.

The rule will apply to the 31 clubs in the Primera A and Primera B Divisions. Local tailor Marcelo Chiloa was quoted as saying "it's a great day for football, a great day for fashion and a great day for the Chilean suit makers and sellers."

The U.S. national team said goodbye to captain Thomas Dooley and welcomed an encouraging glimpse into the future.

Ben Olsen and Eddie Lewis, two members of a massive youth movement under new coach Bruce Arena, scored their first international goals as the United States beat Chile 2-1 Sunday.

The result kept the Americans unbeaten in four games since Arena took over the national

program, including a stunning 3-0 win over Germany two weeks ago in Jacksonville.

"I will miss being around the young players on the national team," said Dooley, a veteran of two World Cups who is ending his international career after 81 appearances.

"Otherwise I feel good about leaving space for younger players. I won't be around [for the 2002 World Cup], so it makes sense to step out at a high level."

"It's a great feeling to get my first goal and help the team get another win," Olsen said. "We're on a roll and we want to keep it going."

"This was a day where we gave our young players in our program another taste of international soccer," Arena said. "I think this result speaks well for our future."

Lewis broke a 1-1 tie in the 65th minute with a shot that deflected off Chilean defender Pablo Contreras. That came less than a minute after Chile's Roberto Cartes tied the game with a left-footed blast from 32 yards.

Olsen, who played for Arena last season at D.C. United, scored the game's opening goal in the 58th minute before 14,896 fans at Lockhart Stadium.

Chile coach Nelson Acosta fielded a team featuring six players getting their first international starts. The best of the group was 20-year-old midfielder David Pizarro, who nearly caught U.S. goalkeeper Zach Thornton napping in the second minute with a 40-yard blast that forced a diving save.

Chile: Marcelo Ramirez; Pablo Contreras, Francisco Rojas (Marucio Aros 80), Christian Uribe (Patricio Neira 70), Miguel Ramirez; Clarence Acuna, David Pizarro, Roberto Cartes; Roberto Neira (Rodolfo Moya 74); Luis Mena, Reinaldo Navia.

United States: Zach Thornton (Tom Presthus 46); Thomas Dooley, C.J. Brown, Carlos Llamosa, Eddie Lewis, Richie Williams (Leo Cullen 86), Chris Armas, Ben Olsen, Chad Deering (Clint Mathis 66); Brian McBride, Roy Lassiter (Ante Razov 46).

'BIG PHIL' SERVES UP EMBARRASSING FARE TO PORKY PLAYERS

Sergio Goycochea, former Argentina international goalkeeper, announced his retirement on Tuesday. Goycochea, 35, was one of the few Argentine players to emerge with any credit from the 1990 World Cup in Italy where the team lost 1-0 in the final to West Germany, thanks to a late Andreas Brehme penalty. Speaking in a melancholy voice, a tearful Goycochea said: "I don't want to risk the prestige I have built up over my career (by carrying on)." Goycochea took over between the posts from Nery Pumpido during Italia 90 when the latter broke his leg and helped them through two penalty shoot-outs with Yugoslavia and host nation Italy.

Palmeiras players fumed after coach Luiz Felipe Scolari claimed they were too fat and handed out details of their weight to prove it.

Scolari, who handed the lists to the media before a game on Sunday, was unrepentant and said he would continue issuing comparisons of each player's current weight with his ideal weight before every match.

"There are certain matters which don't need to be made public," said team captain Zinho, a member of Brazil's 1994 World Cup-winning team who was registered as being one kilogram (2.2 lbs) overweight.

Striker Paulo Nunes, listed as 3.1 kilos too heavy, was equally upset. "This didn't need to happen...If I go out to a restaurant, everybody is going to start commenting."

The controversy came one week after Scolari, popularly known as "Big Phil," hinted some of his players were faking injuries to save themselves for a South American Libertadores Cup tie next week.

"It's not up to the players to like it or not. They have to be at the right weight and that's the end of the matter," he said. "Palmeiras pay their players on time and have the right to make demands."

Palmeiras' main target this year is to win the Libertadores for the first time and their campaign begins with a match against fellow Brazilians Corinthians.

Scolari, who weighs in at 91.5 kilos, has been Brazil's most successful coach in terms of titles this decade. But his hardline approach and the physical style employed by his teams have earned him as many critics as admirers.

Clodoaldo, a former Brazilian international winger and member of the 1970 World Cup winning team, is recovering well from a heart operation, it was reported Tuesday.

Clodoaldo, 47, underwent an operation on Monday evening after complaining of feeling unwell during the carnival.

The horrifying ordeal that Mexican keeper Jorge Campos went through is now over: his father, kidnapped in his native Mexico, was released along a highway outside Acapulco.

"My father is well," Jorge Campos told reporters outside the family's home in the Pacific Coast tourist resort. "The doctor said he is in good health and that the only thing he needed was rest."

Asked if any ransom was paid, Jorge Campos replied: "I don't think so."

Mexican television stations broke into regular programming to report the end of a drama that shocked a country that seemingly had grown numb to repeated kidnappings. Afternoon newspapers trumpeted Alvaro Campos' release in banner headlines.

Police said they were continuing to investigate the kidnapping.

As many as eight heavily armed men seized the silver-haired Campos on Feb. 17 at a sports field named for his son in a suburb south of Acapulco.

Tuesday morning, Alvaro Campos, 66, walked up to a police checkpoint outside Acapulco, identified himself and asked for help. He was taken to the Acapulco federal police office, where he met his family.

Police sources, who insisted on anonymity, said the elder Campos had sprained his left ankle when he tumbled down an embankment trying to flee from his captors.

Jorge Campos broke off a team training session in Mexico City and flew to Acapulco to meet with his father.

Investigators suspect the elder Campos was held captive at the town of Tixtlancingo, high in the Sierra Madre mountains. The town is a known stronghold of the Peasant Organization of the Southern Sierra, an activist group linked to the Popular Revolutionary Army

guerrilla organization.

The Campos family supports the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, and Alvaro Campos publicly backed its candidate, Rene Juarez Cisneros, who was elected governor of Guerrero state earlier this month.

Jorge Campos is famous for his flamboyant play as a



goalkeeper on Mexico's national team and teams in the U.S. and Mexican leagues, including the reigning U.S. Major League Soccer champion Chicago Fire. He played in the 1994 and 1998 World Cups.

AFRICA

SUPER EAGLES NAME POWERFUL SQUAD FOR NATIONS CUP CAMPAIGN

Goalkeepers: Ike Shorounmu (FC Zurich), Ndubuisi Egbo (Al-Masry).

Defenders: Taribo West (Inter Milan), Emeka Ifeagwa (Charlton Athletic),

Celestine Babayaro

(Chelsea), Kingsley

Obiekwu (Al-Hilal, Dubai),

Patrick Paschal and

Emmanuel Teberen (both

Altay).

Midfielders: Sunday

Oliseh (Ajax Amsterdam),

Mutiu Adepoju (Real

Sociedad), Garba Lawal

(Roda JC Kerkrade),

Benedict Akwuegbu (FK

Graz), Wilson Oruma

(Samsunspor), Johnson

Sunday and Oluwale

Johnson (both Kwara United).

Strikers: Daniel Amokachi (Besiktas), Victor Ikpeba (Monaco), Tijjani

Babangida (Ajax Amsterdam), Chukwu Ndukwe (Mamelodi Sundowns) and

Jonathan Akpoborle (VfB Stuttgart).



CAMEROON AND ZAMBIA QUALIFY FOR YOUTH WORLD CUP

Zambia qualified for the World Under-20 Championships to be staged in Nigeria in April when they reached the semifinals of the 11th African Nations Youth Cup.

Zambia joined Ghana and Nigeria in the final stages of the competition after beating Guinea 6-2 in their Group B match in Kumasi.

Nigeria, which qualified automatically as hosts for the World Under-20 Championships, also known as the World Youth Cup, thrashed Malawi 5-0 in Kumasi on Thursday to head Group B and ensure qualification for the semis with one more round of playoffs to go.

Ghana qualified on Wednesday after wins over Mali and Angola.

The top two teams in the two qualifying groups go through to the World Under-20 Championship, but as Nigeria qualify automatically, the two third-placed teams will play each other for the fourth place.

Eight under-20 teams are taking part in the African Youth Championship — Ghana, Angola, Mali and Cameroon in Group A,

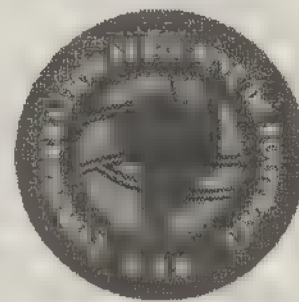
Nigeria, Guinea, Malawi and Zambia in Group B.

Cameroon qualified for the world Under-20 championships on Saturday when it reached the semifinals of the African Nations' Youth Cup.

Cameroon held hosts Ghana to a 1-1 draw in Accra to join Nigeria, Zambia and Ghana in the semifinals of the African competition.

Mali, who defeated Angola 3-1 earlier in the day to finish third in group A of the African competition, will play the team which finishes third in Group B.

Nigeria and Zambia play each other to decide the winners of Group B.



Result of an African Nations Cup, group four qualifying match played at the Odi Stadium on Saturday:

South Africa 4 Gabon 1

Scorers:

South Africa: John Moeti 44, Phil Masinga 50, Shaun Bartlett 57, Benni McCarthy 80

Gabon: Theodore Nzue-Nguema 27
Halftime: 1-1 Attendance: 50,000

MOROCCO CONFIDENT, REF SHOTS PLAYER IN SOUTH AFRICA

Morocco coach Henri Michel said he was confident the North Africans could host the 2000 African Nations Cup in place of Zimbabwe, the original scheduled hosts.

The African Football Confederation (CAN) stripped Zimbabwe of its right to host the tournament earlier this month over what it deemed were inadequate preparations and Michel insisted the Moroccans had the facilities required to step in.

"An African Nations Cup in Morocco is very important and the kingdom has all the facilities required to stage it successfully: modern stadia, marvellous fans and an adequate infrastructure," said Michel.

CAN's executive committee will decide which of Morocco, Egypt and Nigeria will be chosen when it meets on March 10.

Zimbabwe will try to reverse the decision to strip them of the event when they meet African soccer supremo Issa Hayatou in four days time (March 6) in Ghana.

Ugandan club Express Red Eagles withdrew from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Cup tournament on Friday because of a border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Express was due to travel to Eritrea for its first leg tie against Medlaw Megbi in Asmara.

But a bloody border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia has erupted into a full scale war and Express said it could not put its players at risk.



A South African referee shot and killed a player during a match after the player, angry over a disputed goal, lunged at him with a knife, police said Tuesday. Isaac Mkhomo, the 37-year-old referee of the local Wallabies soccer team, was fatally wounded on the field in front of 600 spectators. Now that's showing discipline!

Mkhomo, 37, was shot in the chest and killed. He was taken to a hospital but died. The player, Isaac Mkhomo, was charged with murder and is on bail pending an April 1 court appearance.

The incident occurred during a match between the Wallabies and another local team, scored against the Wallabies.

Some Wallabies fans ran onto the field to protest the goal, which had cut the Wallabies' lead to 2-1, Jacobs said. During the commotion, Mkhomo was shot and killed. The player, Isaac Mkhomo, was charged with murder and is on bail pending an April 1 court appearance.

Mkhomo was shot in the chest and killed. He was taken to a hospital but died. The player, Isaac Mkhomo, was charged with murder and is on bail pending an April 1 court appearance.

ASIA

CLUB V COUNTRY: THE ISSUE THAT WON'T GO AWAY

Singapore club The Warriors are unhappy about the arrangements for their players who turned out last night in a national team friendly.

Singapore team officials must give an assurance that there will be no such last-minute impositions on the club.

National team manager Omar Ibrahim had written to the S League clubs on Tuesday asking for the release of the Lions for the match. But at least two teams, Home United and Singapore Armed Forces FC, declined saying that they had their own commitments.

SAFFC — which had Rezal Hassan, Nazri Nasir, Azhar Salleh and Hafizat Jauharu called up — had lined up a Sunday friendly against the national pre-Olympic squad.

Warriors manager Kok Wai Leong had said on Tuesday that it would too demanding for his players to play two competitive games in as many days.

But after some discussion with his coach Mladen Pralija, he relented.

Said Kok: "I am prepared to help the team this time around and will release the four, but on condition that there will not be a next time."

"We feel very strongly that checking with the clubs before making any national team commitment is a moral obligation that the Singapore team officials must have."

"We are always willing to support the national team, but there must be proper dialogue and early notice. The players must also not suffer because of a lack of foresight."

Omar explained that he received Brunei's confirmation late.

He said that the match date was announced at a Football Association of Singapore Council meeting on Monday, which Kok attended, adding: "Still, I am thankful to him. We are working towards the same objectives and I have

taken note of his dissatisfaction."

The issue may be far from over. There are still problems brewing with regards to the release of players for the pre-Olympic competition

The 30-year-old Geylang United defender pulled out of the Lions' Dunhill Cup team that travelled to Vietnam because of personal problems.

His return beefed up a defence weakened by the withdrawals of key players like R. Sasikumar and S. Subramani, both of whom were in Holland for trials and Aide Iskandar, who was involved in a Home United friendly against

THE PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL CALL-UPS, AND ITS EFFECTS ON CLUB FOOTBALL HAS AGAIN BEEN HIGHLIGHTED, THIS TIME IN SINGAPORE...

Early last week, the Warriors did not release their players for training despite an agreement that the clubs will have them on Tuesdays and Wednesdays only.

SAFFC needed the players for its Tuesday friendly against Selangor but Singapore coach Vincent Subramaniam said that meant he would not get to see his players for four days until the match against Geylang United.

Still on this game, and Kadir Yahayar was recalled for last night's friendly for Singapore.

Johor FC on the same night.

Also recalled was Gombak United striker Toh Choon Ming, who declined an invitation to join the Lions last year because of work commitments.

Louis Lionel, 18, an up-and-coming goalkeeper, was called up as a reserve to Rezal Hassan.

There were some familiar names though. The midfield combination of Mohd Noor Ali, Azhar Salleh, Nazri Nasir and Hafizat Jauharu were there to lend support to the Rafi Ali-Azhar Baksin strike partnership.

THAIS BEATEN BY BRAZIL FOR FINAL SPOT

Brazil, who had left everyone in awe with their scoring prowess, were booed by the crowd when they failed to put the required four goals past North Korea that would have put Thailand in the King's Cup final.

The North Koreans, who needed only a draw to enter the title showdown, erected a formidable defensive wall and the Brazilian youth team were lucky to walk away with a 1-1 scoreline after a spectacular injury-time equaliser by Juan Santos. The North Korean goal was scored by Ri Kyong-mun.

Earlier at the Rajamangala National Stadium, Thailand drew with Hungary 3-3 in an exciting battle.

Thailand have only themselves to blame for their failure to qualify for the final because they let the Hungarians off the hook twice — the same as with North Korea after leading 2-0.

Once again the home team defenders showed their tendency to wilt under pressure.

When the Hungarians moved up from the flanks, the 2-0 lead held by the Thais started to look fragile.

The Thai defenders, exposed to pressure, even forgot the fundamentals and hardly attempted to clear the ball. The Hungarians exploited the lapse in concentration and netted two in 10 minutes to square the match.

Bangkok Asian Games hero Thawatchai Damrong-ongtrakul put Thailand on course again and the hosts came within minutes of pulling off a victory before conceding the equaliser in injury time.

Coach Peter Withe praised his players for their commitment and blamed the lacklustre show by the defenders on lack of experience.

"They [the Thai players] couldn't have done any more, they showed great commitment," he said. "You look at Chukart [Noohsalung] — he was injured in the first half but still played on. One can't ask for anything more."

Withe added: "All credit to the Hungarians. They showed great resilience. They trailed twice and still managed to equalise."

"When they put us under pressure, the defenders lost concentration. That is mainly because of lack of experience in playing against strong teams."

"They would crowd a player with the ball, but then won't clear the ball. They should at least have cleared the ball to the Hungarian half because they can't score in their own half."

"It was a very exciting game. We created some very good opportunities and we could have won the match in the dying moments."

Hungary coach Istvan Mihalecz praised the Thai strikers and midfielders, but added that his team succeeded in tying the match because of the defensive weaknesses of the home side.

Thailand were put ahead in the 13th minute when skipper Kierpisak Senamuang volleyed home a corner shot from Dusit Chalermnuek. Kierpisak was instrumental in the home team's second goal when he set up Thongchai Akrapong seven minutes later.

The hosts continued to dominate and had numerous opportunities to add to their tally. Seksan Piturat came close to scoring twice in the first half, hitting the bar with a header once before seeing another headed off by Hungary goalkeeper Kurucsa Kornel.

The Hungarians, who played a pedestrian game in the beginning, upped the tempo late in the first half and captain Sandor Kovacs tapped home a Mirko Jovanovich shot which rebounded off the Thai goalkeeper Saravuth Khambua in the 34th minute.

Hungary continued their offense in the second half and were rewarded with the equaliser in the 47th minute when a blasting drive by Szerdjan Kosztics was deflected into the goal by a Thai defender.

The Thais recovered and went back on the offensive. Thawatchai put them in lead again in the 48th minute with a perfectly-executed shot from 30 yards. Thongchai could have extended the margin but his chip from near the top of the box hit the bar after it had beaten the Hungarian goalkeeper in the 90th minute.

Hungary were denied a penalty for a handball committed inside the Thai box in the injury time but they remained unruffled and a minute later Peter Balassa headed in the equaliser.

With the Thais on the attack, match referee Nik Ahmad Haji Yakub of Malaysia let the injury time run to almost six minutes. The fourth referee had earlier signalled three minutes to be added on. Thailand's last chance of winning was squandered by Therdak Jarman.

The two sides will meet again in the third-place playoff at the same venue tomorrow, while Brazil and North Korea will battle it out for the King's Cup trophy.

FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	2	1	0	11	2	7
N Korea	3	0	3	0	5	5	3
Thailand	3	0	2	1	6	9	2
Hungary	3	0	2	1	5	11	2

ISRAEL WINS BUT IRAN LOSES

Israel scored two goals in as many minutes to win a friendly international 2-0 against Latvia at the Teddy Kollek stadium in Jerusalem.

Israel took the lead on a goal by midfielder Haim Revivo, who plays for Spanish title contenders Celta Vigo.

Latvian goalkeeper Alexanders Kolinko could only parry Israeli captain Tal Benin's cross onto Revivo, who controlled the ball with his chest and slotted through a throng of defenders.

Then, in the 25th minute, Israeli striker Ronen Harazi took advantage of poor marking to swivel in the box and shoot past Kolinko.

Latvia almost scored in the 29th minute but Vladimir Babiceuf's 30-meter free kick ricocheted off the Israeli goalkeeper.

In the second half, both managers experimented with their lineups.

Israel fielding seven substitutes while Latvia replaced five players.

Results from Tuesday's matches in the 30th King's Cup under-20 international football tournament:

Thailand 2 (Kiattisak Senamuang 33, Chaichan Khiosen 68) North Korea 2 (Kang Sun 70, Ri Hyok-Chol 74)

Brazil 6 (Alessandro Amantio 24, Victor Pinheiro 34, Rodrigo Lacerda 66, Ronaldo Assis Moreira 79, Lucio Flavio 83, Luis Eduardo 89)

Iran played in a friendly against Rapid Vienna, losing 3-1 to the Austrians. The halftime score was 0-1 in favour of Iran. The first Rapid Vienna goal came from a long ball into the box to a forward which was unmarked and he headed the ball home.

Then the second Rapid Vienna goal came from a corner kick, the long ball from corner was punched towards Iran's goal by Gholampour, which then hit a Rapid Vienna player and rolled

into the goal.

The visitors then hit back. Iran's goal came from a free-kick the powerful shot by Suttar Hamedani was rebounded by goalie and Faraz Fatemi just reached for the ball and scored.

The coup de grace for the Iranians came when the RV player sent a long ball into the box, but Gholampour was badly positioned, the ball hit the far post and went into the goal.

The referee was not sure whether the ball could have entered the Iranian goal from that angle, as were the fans and players, but it stood and the home side went on to finish the game as winners 3-1.

Iran: Gholampour, Zarincheh, Khani, Hamedani, Hashemi-Nasab, Razian, Hatali, Estili, Emamifar, Hashemian, Khatibi (Faraz Fatemi).

VIETNAMESE EXODUS?

Foreign teams according to new regulations to be passed this week, a Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) official said.

VFF general secretary Pham Ngoc Vien said the move would be effective immediately, although details on who would be eligible for such transfers was unclear.

Members of police and army football clubs would be subject to separate regulations, which could restrict their leaving the country to join foreign teams.

There are no independent professional football players in Vietnam, as all members must belong to an organization backing the team, such as the customs team,

police or army who pay them a bonus to play.

"There are some points in the regulation which differ from other countries because the concepts of professional and non-professional football are not clarified yet in Vietnam," he told AFP.

Other details, such as what portion of a player's contracted salary would go to the state were yet to be finalized, he said. Top Vietnamese striker Le Huynh Duc was last year the subject of a transfer bid from Malaysian first division side Perak, reportedly offered \$5,000 a month, the Vietnam News reported.

ITALY

SERIE A ... ROMA PULLS OFF SHOCK WIN

Brazilian Paulo Sergio ended AC Milan's 11-match unbeaten streak, scoring a 64th-minute header to give AS Roma a brilliant 1-0 victory at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Saturday.

The loss prevented AC Milan from taking the Serie A lead by itself for the first time since 1996, and left its rival Lazio atop the standings.

AC Milan dropped to 43 points, two behind Lazio before the Romans' game on Sunday.

Elsewhere in the Serie A on Saturday, Enrico Chiesa scored twice and Hernan Crespo one to lead Parma's victory dance over a leadenfooted Perugia 3-1.

At Milan's San Siro stadium a sold-out crowd of 80,000 saw struggling powerhouses Internazionale and Juventus play to a goalless draw which left both team 10 points or more adrift from the lead and possibly out of contention.

In the only other game Saturday, Piacenza routed Bologna 5-0.

The four league matches played on Saturday involved Italian teams engaged in European competitions next week.

Here are some of the highlights...

AS ROMA 1 AC MILAN 0

At Rome's Olympic stadium, Roma overwhelmed Milan with a more aggressive second-half play, after the visiting team wasted two clear scoring chances early in the first half by Leonardo and Oliver Bierhoff.

Left unmarked close to the net, Paulo Sergio got his head onto a perfect cross by captain Francesco Totti and recorded his 10 goal this season.

Paulo Sergio's goal followed a powerful free kick by Totti that hit the bar.

Roma, which slowed another title contender last Sunday by holding

Fiorentina to a goalless draw, missed a second goal in the final minutes when Italian striker Marco Delvecchio, unexpectedly starting in the place of newly signed Brazilian Fabio Junior, failed to finish an easy chance.

The victory was a personal triumph for Roma's Czech coach Zdenek Zeman, who was warmly applauded by a crowd of about 65,000 at the end of the match.

Zeman had been approached by groups of Roman fans last month as the team struggled through a series of poor results following a strong start to the season.

INTER 0 JUVENTUS 0

In Milan, Filippo Inzaghi, returning from a long injury and fielded in the second half, wasted the best scoring chance for Juventus in the 80th.

Minutes before, keeper Angelo Peruzzi saved Juventus, stopping a short-range shot by Nicola Ventola off an assist from Roberto Baggio. Ventola had replaced Chilean veteran Ivan Zamorano.

The match was a good test for both teams heading into Wednesday's Champions Cup first-leg quarterfinals. Inter travels to Manchester United. Juventus plays Olympiakos at home (see preview on page 26).

PIACENZA 5 BOLOGNA 0

At Piacenza, Simone Inzaghi, younger brother of Filippo, scored three goals as lowly Piacenza converted three of four penalty kicks to hammer a hapless Bolognese outfit.

The victory moved Piacenza out of the relegation zone, and came by dominating a dull and reshuffled Bologna, which rested some key players heading into tonight's (Tuesday's) UEFA Cup match against France's Lyon.

PARMA 3 PERUGIA 1

In Parma, counter-attacks by Ivan Kaviedes and Hidetoshi Nakata gave Perugia early chances before Parma took the lead courtesy of a 31st-minute



penalty by Chiesa, awarded when Argentine forward Abel Balbo was fouled.

Chiesa made it 2-0 in the 44th minute. Hernan Crespo scored Parma's third goal with eight minutes left, after wasting three consecutive chances made by his Colombian teammate Faustino Asprilla.

It was Crespo's 15th season goal and moved him within three goals of compatriot Gabriel Batistuta of Fiorentina and the league scoring lead.

In a summary of other games, Lazio won on the road at Vicenza 2-1, Fiorentina once again showed why Batistuta is so integral, they drew 1-1 with strugglers Salernitana away, Venezia won at home 1-0 over Udinese while Bari and Cagliari drew 1-1 in Bari with Andersson scoring for Bari and Negrouz for the visitors.

Vince Grella's Empoli lost at home to fellow strugglers Samp, the Aussie did not get a run in the 1-0 loss.

Lazio are now on top with 48 pts, followed by Parma in second spot on 44, Fiorentina 44 and AC Milan on 43.

At the bottom of Serie A, Empoli is on 15, Vicenza is 20 as is Salernitana, with the Reds of Piacenza fourth bottom on 22. The interesting clash for next week will be the near rivals AC Milan playing Piacenza in Milano, while Bari get the chance to play a possibly jaded Inter in Southern Italy.

In Serie B Genoa thumped Ternana 6-1 and Verona had a big win over Cremonese, winning 5-2 at home.

Verona is on top with 49 followed by Treviso on 46 and Torino on 44. At the bottom Cremonese is on 16, F. Andria 21 with Lucchese and Reggiana on 22.

Next week, bottom side Cremonese plays second top Treviso and Napoli play Cesena and Chievo plays host to Torino.

Ciao Soccer Weekly till next week



SACCHI HAS HIS SAY

Andrea Sacchi, the former coach of AC Milan, said at the Italian Football Federation's annual congress on Friday that the federation should look into the possibility of a new league.

Sacchi spent about three hours in the office of prosecutor Raffaele Guariniello, who opened his investigation in August.

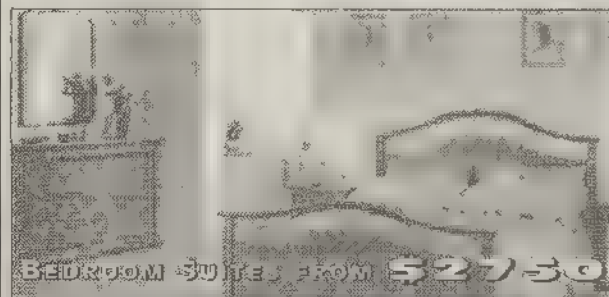
"I am doing his job seriously," was Sacchi's only comment before he left the office.

Guariniello is investigating the alleged involvement of coaches, trainers, team officials and players — including former stars Diego Maradona and Michel Platini — during his inquiry prompted by remarks of AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman about sudden muscle development among Serie A players.



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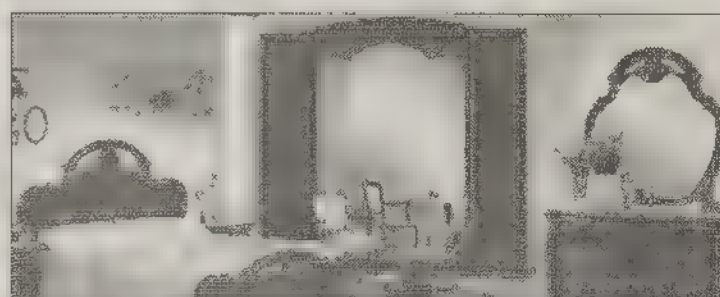


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EUROPE

In politics they say disunity is death. At Inter Milan this may prove correct too after extraordinary dressing room scenes last week.

Nigeria defender Taribo West and striker Nicola Ventola, who moved from Bari for £7million only last summer, had to be hauled off the Romanian Lucescu by shocked team-mates.

West and Ventola have been fined £20,000 each by Inter president Massimo Moratti while the team are now riven by several different factions in the build-up to their Champions League quarter-final first leg clash at Old Trafford tomorrow (Wed).

Moratti acted quickly to punish West and Ventola in a desperate attempt to keep the lid on the frustrations within his unhappy camp. West has become a national hero in Nigeria after founding and funding the Taribo West Foundation, which cares for victims of the civil unrest in his homeland.

He has sent over £100,000 back to Lagos to give comfort, with injured or orphaned children the chief beneficiaries. The flip side of his personality has given him a reputation in Italy for an aggressive streak which again showed itself this week with Lucescu.

Now Moratti, despite his admiration for the defender, has finally lost patience with him.

West had already thrown his shirt at Lucescu for substituting him in a game against Vicenza, but completely lost control after being left to sit it out on the bench while his team lost 1-0 against Lazio in Rome.

Following the game, a shouting match turned ugly as Lucescu, holding the fort in preparation for the summer arrival of Marcello Lippi, was confronted by the two players.

Ventola, having played throughout the Serie A campaign and during Inter's qualification for the last eight in the Champions League, went mad after being substituted by Ivan Zamorano against Lazio.

West seems certain to be sold in the summer. Only last month, he infuriated Newcastle United manager Ruud Gullit when he turned down a £4.2m move after giving the impression he was ready to leave.

In the short term his bitter argument with his coach is likely to have cost him a place at Old Trafford in favour of veteran defender Giuseppe Bergomi, 35.

But even Bergomi, Inter's captain, has not been able to stay out of trouble.

He received a four-game suspension and £4,000 fine after being sent off, along with two other team-mates, in an Italian Cup semi-final against Parma last week.

Bergomi was accused of pushing referee Stefano Braschi and insulting him. However, the player will still be able to play in the first leg against United.



Taribo West: Lucescu can kiss my

PARIS-MISMATCH: WOERNS' NIGHTMARE AT PSG

Germany defender Christian Woerns has admitted that his move to Paris Saint German last year had been a blunder.

"It was a mistake to go to Paris. I thought it would be different," said Woerns. Woerns said that he has already told PSG bosses that he wants to leave.

"You cannot hold someone who wants to go," he said. The 26-year-old defender is reported to be pursued by four clubs, with an offer of \$8.6million from German Bundesliga side Borussia Dortmund. But he added: "I won't be making the same mistake as I did going to Paris." One of Germany's few stars at the 1998 World Cup finals, Woerns has promised PSG he will remain with them until the end of the current season.

British striker Kevin Campbell said on Wednesday he was determined to leave Turkish soccer club Trabzonspor following what he said were racist insults from the club's chairman.

"I am first of all a black man," Anatolian news agency quoted Campbell as saying in a statement. "I can accept routine criticism, but when comments are made concerning my race, football is not important."

Trabzonspor Chairman Mehmet Ali Yilmaz



Germany's Christian Woerns: His Paris move has been a shocker.

told Turkish television over the weekend that Campbell's performance at the club had been a disappointment.

"We bought a cannibal who calls himself a striker," he said, describing the striker as "discoloured."

Campbell said he was seeking a move away from the club, which he joined from Nottingham Forest in July last year in a four-million-pound move.

"The chairman's statement is the greatest insult in my life. Nothing, no apology can heal the injury," he said. "My adventure at Trabzonspor is finished. If permission is given for me to leave here with my pride it would be better."

Trabzonspor are currently in fourth place in the Turkish first division. Campbell has struggled to find the form that saw him net 23 goals for Forest last season.

Spokesman Hikmet Onur said the club was still studying Campbell's statement and had no immediate comment.

BERTI SAYS HI TO MAN UTD WHILE CARECA SAYS CIAO TO NAPOLI



Berti Vogts doing his Elvis impression at France 98.

Berti Vogts, former Germany national team coach, spent last week watching Manchester United train as a guest of manager Alex Ferguson.

Ferguson invited Vogts when the pair met during United's Champions' League game against Bayern Munich in September.

United spokesman Ken Ramsden said: "He has come over as a guest of Alex Ferguson to see how the players

train. Coaches always want to see the methods used at other clubs and when Brian Kidd was assistant manager here he often visited other clubs."

Vogts, who stepped down as Germany coach last September, said: "I want to see how things work on the training ground and how their youth system works, because they have a lot of very good young players."

Last week Vogts accepted an offer to sit on the board of struggling Bundesliga club Borussia Moenchengladbach. He was a prominent member of the Moenchengladbach side which won five German titles and lifted the UEFA Cup twice in the 1970s.

Players for Albanian first division team Burreli went on a hunger strike in an attempt to force officials to lift a ban on the club playing at home, the Albanian soccer federation said.

Burreli, which is bottom of the table with 14 points from 16 games, was banned from playing at home for four matches after automatic gunfire was heard at the ground during a match against SK Tirana in December.

The match referee Myrteza Alkja was also punched and kicked by two Burreli players, who now face long bans.

The players claim that police were responsible for the shooting and have asked for a public apology from them.

"They want us to either remove or reduce the sanctions," said federation spokesman Ismet Bellova.

However, the federation has warned Burreli to call

off the strike or face a more severe punishment.

Former Brazilian striker Careca was given a rousing farewell by Napoli fans in his testimonial on Tuesday.

Careca, who helped Napoli win the Italian championship in 1987 and 1990, played the first half with colleagues from those successful seasons. The notable exception was Diego Maradona.

He appeared for Napoli's Brazilian opponents after

Striker Mario Jardel has been voted Portugal's player of the year for the second successive season by the Portuguese sports newspaper A Bola. The 25-year-old FC Porto player was also awarded the Golden Ball award as the most successful striker in the Portuguese league in 1998. International midfielder Hugo Leal, 18, of Benfica, was named as the best young player of the season. He was also voted the best Portuguese player in the 1998-99 season. The award was presented to Jardel at a ceremony in Lisbon last night. The other nominees for the award were Luis Figo, Paulo Bento, and Nuno Gomes.

the interval. Napoli won 3-1, Careca scoring one of their two first half goals.

Two retired referees controlled the match — ahead of the FIFA experiment to start next season.

Real Madrid eased past Racing Santander 1-0 in midweek, reaching the Spanish Cup semifinals 7-2 on aggregate.

Predrag Mijatovic scored the only goal of an entertaining second leg from a thunderous free kick after 74 minutes.

Star performer for Real was midfielder Jose Maria Gutierrez who dazzled with the ball at his feet although his finishing once again left a lot to be desired.

He missed two good first half chances, including a

close range header after 25 minutes which skimmed over the crossbar.

Racing had their chances in the second half and Real goalkeeper Bodo Illgner was required to bring off three acrobatic reaction saves to ensure he kept a clean sheet.

EUROPE

BAYERN WIN BADLY, EURO CLUBS WORRIED OVER CHAMPIONS LEAGUE KICK-OFFS



Bayern Munich churned out another rout in the Bundesliga, this time 4-0 against Hansa Rostock, but neither the players or the coach were impressed by their own performance.

"We played well for 30 minutes, that's all," said Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. "We played badly in the second half and that's when we scored all the goals."

But Rostock, fighting relegation, fell apart after Munich striker Giovane Elber connected in the 69th minute, paving the way for Munich to pull 12 points clear in the table.

Carsten Jancker then followed in the 80th with a falling-down goal. Elber outfoxed the Rostock keeper for the ball in the corner in the 87th and then curved a shot into the empty net to tie for the league best with 12 goals.

Even veteran libero Lothar Matthaeus got into the act as Munich tuned up for its grudge match against FC Kaiserslautern in the Champions Cup quarterfinals tomorrow (Wed).

Matthaeus caught a downfield pass in the air from Stefan Effenberg that went 30 yards and blasted it into the goal with two minutes to play for his first season goal.

"I think, 4-0 was too high," said Jancker. "Rostock was competitive for 70 minutes. If we were really playing well, we should have led 2-0 at the half."

Munich, now boasting a 50-13 goal differential.

Leverkusen played a scoreless match against Hamburg. Ned Zelic's 1860 also couldn't score against Duisburg and Kaiserslautern was held to 1-1 on Friday against Stuttgart.

In fact, four of six matches didn't produce a goal Saturday. The league could tie its record low for a round of 11 goals if Hertha and Schalke don't generate a score when they tangle Sunday.

SC Freiburg against Wolfsburg and Frankfurt facing Moenchengladbach ended scoreless while Borussia Dortmund stopped the drought by downing FC Nuremberg 3-0.

Bayern Munich may have been looking past Rostock to its key match Wednesday against Kaiserslautern in the Champions Cup quarterfinals. Munich still has a score to settle against the defending champions.

"That's an important match, even for me," admitted Hitzfeld, who led Dortmund to the Champions Cup title two years ago. "FC Kaiserslautern has angered Munich."

Kaiserslautern, coming up from the second division, humiliated Munich last season by completing a title run under Otto Rehhagel, a coach the Bavarians had fired one season earlier.

Dortmund, an under-achieving team all season, was booed steadily by its own fans at Westfalenstadion despite the one-sided win against a weak Nuremberg team. The match drew 64,000 spectators.

German international Andreas Moeller's headed in the team's first goal in the 11th minute, followed by Swiss striker Stephane Chapuisat's shot in the 54th and a deflected free kick leading to a 62nd minute goal by Russian Vladimir But.

Some of the top European clubs are worried over planned kickoff times for the expanded Champions League and UEFA Cup matches next season.

Newly proposed kickoff times for the over-hauled Champions League are set for 20:45 CET, sparking concern among countries in earlier time zones such as Portugal, and those in later time zones such as Russia.

UEFA Cup matches are slotted into two different groups, with earlier games scheduled to start between 17:00 and 18:00 CET, and later matches beginning from 20:00 to 21:00 CET.

"There is no chance of changing the Champions League slots," said UEFA General Secretary Gerhard Aigner, who later admitted UEFA would have to look at some special cases. "We're trying to avoid having four

matches live, one night after another.

"Having matches at two, four, six and eight o'clock makes everyone tired of football. We're trying to create a new pattern."

The notion of having to play a midweek UEFA Cup match at 4 p.m. drew nervous concern from Premier League representatives from Arsenal, Liverpool, Chelsea and Manchester United, who attended Thursday's meeting along with 46 other European clubs.

"This came as quite a surprise and it gives us serious concern," said Peter Kenyon, Manchester United's deputy chief executive director. "At four o'clock midweek people are working. Quite clearly this doesn't work for us. We need a full stadium."

"And it causes serious logistical problems such as transportation and policing," Kenyon added.

Fifty clubs were invited by UEFA to attend the two-day workshop, which ends Friday, with the aim of reinforcing the relationship between clubs and supporters.

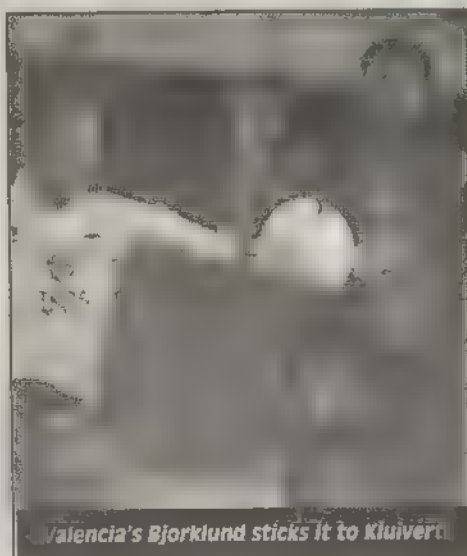
Lorient gave itself a survival lifeline with a crucial 1-0 win at fellow struggler Le Havre in the French first division on Friday.

The win means that the minnow jumps above Le Havre, though it remains in the relegation zone.

Bottom club Sochaux went ahead at Metz with a 40th minute Bernard Bouger goal, but Sebastien Schemmel equalized for the home team two minutes later.

Toulouse continued its improving form with a 1-1 draw at Bastia. Daye Prince opened the scoring for Bastia, but Andrade Oceano nicked a point for Toulouse.

In other games Auxerre 1, Lens 2; Rennes 2, Nancy 1. On Thursday, Marseille beat Strasbourg 1-0.



Valencia's Bjorklund sticks it to Kluyvert

Meanwhile over in Spain, Miguel Angel Angulo and Claudio Lopez both scored in the final eight minutes as Valencia beat league leader FC Barcelona for the second time in four days, 4-2.

Valencia, which won 4-3 on Wednesday to advance to the Copa del Rey semifinals, went to within four points of the table's lead.

After it was 2-2, Angulo gave Valencia the lead in the 82nd minute and Lopez scored his second of the game five minutes later to seal the victory.

Elsewhere Betis ruined John Toshack's return to the Spanish Primera Division, beating Real Madrid 3-2 to hand the perennial power its third straight loss.

In other games, Atletico Madrid drew 0-0 with Oviedo, and Athletic Bilbao drew with Celta Vigo 0-0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ... NOW IT'S GETTING SERIOUS



With Daryl Katz

The European Champions League resumes tomorrow night at the quarterfinal stage, with some of the biggest clubs in the history of the competition remaining in contention.

Arguably the most intriguing tie involves English heavyweights Manchester United and Inter Milan of Italy.

Manchester United have enjoyed a fairly successful decade in domestic football, but the European Cup is the one trophy to have eluded manager Alex Ferguson.

United have added to their recent success to the domestic scene by finishing the highest level. Ferguson has a record of 11 wins in 12 games for the Premier League, but as the more defensive and tactical approach of the Premier League has taken hold, the club's success in Europe has been limited.

Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke, the club's two most potent strike forces in Europe. With the combative nature of Roy Keane, the club's skills of David Beckham and the constant threat of Ryan Giggs, United are a tough proposition, especially in their Old Trafford theatre of dreams.

Scoring a record number of goals in the league stages of the competition, United also conceded regularly as a result of some suspect defensive performances. Since then, however, Peter Schmeichel has returned to his form of old while Jaap Stam has begun to look worth every cent of his \$25 million transfer fee.

If there is one factor which may yet disrupt their European campaign, it is that they still find themselves contending both the arduous English Premiership and the FA Cup.

Inter Milan have no such worries. Placed sixth in Serie A and realistically out of title contention, their priority is clear.

The Italian giants and two-time former European champions have other problems, however, which may hinder their quest to secure the European Cup for the first time since 1965.

Their most dangerous offensive weapon, Brazilian striker Ronaldo, is struggling with injury and may not be fit to play, having just returned to training in the last week.

There have also been reports of dissension in the squad. Nigerian defender Taribo West and Nicola Ventola are allegedly involved in a dressing room altercation with coach Mircea Lucescu.

Even experienced 35-year-old captain Giuseppe Bergomi, has been in trouble.

Sent off in an Italian Cup match against Parma, he has been banned for four matches and fined \$9,000. Argentine midfielder Javier Zanetti has also been disciplined over incidents in the same match.

Despite rumours of factions forming in the squad, Inter will present a formidable challenge to United on Wednesday night.

The Italian side boast an array of talent including Italy's golden boy, Roberto Baggio, Chilean Ivan Zamorano, French playmaker Youri Djorkaeff and Argentine midfield stalwart Diego Simeone.

Simeone and Beckham meet for the first time since their clash at France '98, which saw the English midfielder dismissed and subsequently vilified by the English media and public.

Both sides have good European records. Inter have won the UEFA Cup three times this decade, including last season. United's recent Champions League record is impressive, this being their third consecutive appearance in the knockout stages.

This is an encounter between two outstanding teams and the quarterfinal tie is a challenge strongly in the final stages of the competition.

The second Italian club remaining in the draw is Juventus, the powerhouse of Italian soccer in recent seasons under master tactician Marcello Lippi.

The Lippi era has come to a close though, following a run of indifferent form in the league. The legendary coach has been replaced by Carlo Ancelotti, who has given some impetus to a flagging side.

While missing key forward Alessandro Del Piero, Ancelotti will pin his hopes on influential French stars Didier Deschamps and Zinedine Zidane, as well as the proven goalscorer, Filippo Inzaghi.

Like Inter, Juve are well-adapted in Serie A and will pour heart and soul into their quest for a fourth consecutive appearance in the

Champions League final.

Juve's opposition is in the form of Greek champions, Olympiakos. Record holders in Greece with 27 league titles, Olympiakos came through a tough group including the likes of Ajax Amsterdam and FC Porto.

The record of Greek sides in this competition is not a tale with Panathinaikos in '97 the only finalists. However, Olympiakos will be keen to make an impression against a Juventus side seemingly in decline.

The third tie sees defending champions Real Madrid pitted against the dangerous Ukrainians of Dynamo Kiev.

The demanding Real fans long for the days of Puskas and Di Stéfano, when their great side of the late 1950s dominated the European Cup, winning the trophy in each of its first five seasons.

Real are currently in turmoil, however. Their challenge for the Spanish title has foundered on the back of some inadequate defensive performances, including a 3-0 reverse at the hands of bitter rivals Barcelona.

The inevitable result was the exit of Dutch coach Guus Hiddink, dismissed in favour of John Toshack.

Toshack's first game in charge hardly proved memorable. Real crashing 3-2 at Real Betis last Saturday. The new coach lamented the lack of quality finishing, and his side now have little time in which to rediscover their form.

Real will need the likes of Raul Gonzales, Fernando Morientes and Predrag Mijatovic firing on all cylinders if they are to compete with the likes of Dynamo Kiev.

Dynamo have an awesome record in domestic football. They dominated the Soviet league in the 1980s, and have won six of seven titles since the formation of the Ukrainian national league in 1992.

They also possess the best European record of all former Soviet clubs, having won the Cup Winners Cup in 1975 and 1986. Their current side forms the backbone of the Ukrainian national team.

Dynamo obliterated Barcelona over two legs in the group stages of this competition last season. Their 7-0 aggregate win was inspired primarily by the efforts of their awesome striking duo of Andrei Shevchenko and Sergei Rebrov.

Real will know that they face a daunting prospect, particularly in the away leg.

The final tie is the all-German affair involving current champions Kaiserslautern and runaway leaders of the 1998-99 title race, Bayern Munich.

Last season Kaiserslautern beat Bayern to the German title at the first attempt following promotion. Coach Otto Rehhagel would like nothing better than to rub salt in the wound by eliminating the German giants from the premier European competition.

They dominated their group during the league stages, even though it included the likes of Portugal's Benfica and Dutch club PSV Eindhoven.

Kaiserslautern will start the tie as underdogs though, with Bayern currently flying high.

Twelve points clear at the top of the German league table, the Munich side hunger for a return to the European glory days of the mid 1970s, when Franz Beckenbauer and Gerd Muller inspired them to three consecutive European Cup triumphs.

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld is accustomed to the demands of the Champions League, having taken Borussia Dortmund to the trophy in 1997.

Bayern won the group of death to qualify for the quarterfinals, with victories over Barcelona, both home and away. They also secured two draws against Manchester United, coming from behind in both matches.

Spurred on by the seemingly tireless Lothar Matthaeus, Bayern are now well-placed to launch a serious assault on this season's major prize.

Strikers Carsten Jancker and Brazilian Giovane Elber are in awe-inspiring form and Kaiserslautern have an a mighty task on their hands in the first leg at Munich's Olympic stadium.

UK

TOSH BACK IN SPAIN, ARDS SIGN YOUNG KEEPER

In Ireland Linfield's young goalkeeper David Henry has moved on loan to first division Ards.

The deal is initially for one month although Blues boss David Jeffrey said it is not a prelude to a permanent transfer because Henry is seen as one for the future at Windsor Park.

The 21-year-old made his debut for Ards on Saturday in their vital away game with Larne. Tommy Cassidy's side, long time runaway leaders in division one, have been out-of-sorts recently slipping to second in the table but Henry's arrival is a major boost for them.

Jeffrey said to Irish media: "We have three goalkeepers, Neil Inglis, Robert Robinson and David Henry, at the club and due to injuries and other circumstances David has not had that many first team games.

"We feel this loan move to Ards will benefit him because the first division is a higher level of football than the B Division.

"We still see David as having a big future at our club. He is a 21-year-old professional and is locally based — a major requirement in our plans.

"Tommy Cassidy helped us out with his knowledge of Cypriot football before our European game this season and we are pleased to return the favour.

"Most importantly, though, this move will be good for David and our club in the long term."

"There is a lot of doom and gloom

around the club because of results recently but we can still win the first division and won't be giving in without a fight."

John 'Tosh' Toshack has spoken to Welsh media about his career change, moving from Turkey to Spain.

Cardiff-born Toshack is leaving Turkey after 18 months with Besiktas to succeed Guus Hiddink at Real.

The European Cup holders are paying Besiktas 600,000 US dollars (£372,671) compensation.

Speaking to Welsh media he said, "Strange as it may seem, it was a very difficult decision.

"Coming to Turkey has been very positive for me. In many aspects, I'm sad to be leaving I was very apprehensive before I came here but I have been very well treated

"We won the Turkish Cup and the Super Cup last year beating Galatasaray both times.

"We are through to the Turkish Cup final this season, probably against Galatasaray again, and going neck and neck in the league with only two defeats in 22 matches.

"The club has had a few financial problems recently when myself and four foreign players I signed weren't paid for two months.

"Generally, though, I wouldn't criticise anyone at the club. I've met some lovely people here, quality people at all levels.

"But when you've been in the game a long time you get a feeling about making decisions.

"Since I've been here I've had three or four good job opportunities but decided to stay. This time, though, I feel I should move on. I had two clauses in my contract.

"Besiktas had to pay me a certain sum if they wanted to get rid of me and I had to pay them double that amount if I wanted to leave.

"I just hope I am doing the right thing. It's a very delicate time to be joining Real, who play Dynamo Kiev in the quarter-finals of the Champions League next Wednesday.

"It's a very, very important job at a critical stage in the season. And there's not much time to do anything before the Kiev game."

Toshack, lured to Turkey by a £1m contract, was probably made a "double-your-money" offer to return to the Bernabau

Stadium.

To transform their season, why did the Madrid club, sixth in the Spanish League, seven points behind Barcelona, go back for the man they sacked 10 years ago? And why



did he accept?

"They know me there and I know them. During my first two-year spell we reached the cup final and won the championship with a record number of goals (107) and points.

"Why did they get rid of me? We lost twice in 42 games — that was the trouble."

ENGLAND RANKED 11

The new system of calculating FIFA's world football rankings has, as planned, brought more stability to the list with the top 20 countries unchanged.

Brazil and world champions France are first and second with a comfortable lead over joint third-placed nations Croatia and Italy in the rankings released on Wednesday.

Since January, the monthly rankings have included a "stabilising mechanism" to iron out what FIFA described as "over-dramatic short term fluctuations" in teams' positions.

The rankings now take into account only seven instead of eight games a year, and results over eight years rather than six years will be counted which means the world rankings now include performances over two World Cups.

Top 20 February 1999 rankings (all unchanged since January).

- 1 Brazil
- 2 France
- 3 Croatia
- 4 Italy
- 5 Germany
- 6 Argentina
- 7 Czech Republic
- 8 Netherlands
- 9 Spain
- 10 Romania
- 11 England
- 12 Mexico
- 13 Norway
- 14 Sweden
- 15 Denmark
- 16 Yugoslavia
- 17 Portugal
- 18 Austria
- 19 Morocco
- 20 Chile

IF YOU CARE ... BE THERE, SAYS CRISIS CLUB

DUNDEE FIGHTS FOR ITS FUTURE

Scottish media reports claim that Dundee owner Peter Marr blasted a report that suggested he believed the club would be thrown out of the Scottish Premier League at the end of the season for failing to redevelop Dens Park.

The club have to have a new 10,000-seater arena by July 31 or they will be expelled from the new league.

Reacting angrily to that, he rubbished the story and expressed his confidence the club would be able to find the money, which they have admitted they do not have, in time for work to get under way next month and be finished in time to meet the SPL deadline.

"I still believe that in the next few weeks things will be put in place so we can go ahead and do up the stadium in the way we have to," he said.

Marr has already indicated ways of raising the cash will include additional security being put in place by the board, a share issue and limited borrowing.

He also met with members of the local business community to discuss the club's future, and a similar meeting with supporters' groups will take place.

There, in his capacity as chairman of the Association of Dundee Supporters' Clubs, will be Norrie Price, and he has repeated their call for widespread support from fans.

Last Saturday was a special day for the supporters: "We are calling this 'Dee-Day' for the club and it is up to as many fans as possible to show their support by going along," he said.

"The message is simple — if you really care, be there!"

A plate of Tagliatelle may have been the thing that snapped Kilhe's jovial Englishman Dylan Kerr out of his injury induced depression.

This season has tested the Kilmarnock full back's patience to the hilt. As his team-mates enjoy what is without doubt the club's best spell in many a year, although they have failed to sustain the equilibrium after the winter shutdown, Kerr has played only a cameo role.

A recurring groin injury has restricted him to just 10 outings this term, and while depression was not an issue — "I don't get depressed, what's the point?" — the frustration of not being able to rid himself of the problem that tore him apart.

"I would always go into the dressing room and gee the boys up and wish them well, but round about Christmas, when I felt really low because no matter what I tried the injury wasn't clearing up, I found myself watching only 20 minutes of the matches before going home because I missed playing so much," he began.

"During the week I was getting my treatment, going to the gym and then going home in a miserable mood. My girlfriend, Emma, was the nearest person to me, so she bore the brunt of my moaning — and the wall got the brunt of my anger. It got so bad Emma just turned round one day and whacked me.

"She also threw a plate of tagliatelle at me, and the dent made by the plate is still on the wall, but it made me realise that being angry wasn't helping me get fit."

God bless Emma, perhaps there are other players who would like her unique treatment.

The players many thought may not play for Scotland again could just be the ticket for desperate Scottish manager Craig Brown on the eve of the Euro qualifiers.

John Spencer and Eoin Jess, abandoned by Craig Brown, have emerged as the players who can pull Scotland through the injury crisis which threatens to undermine the quest to reach the Euro finals.

Brown admitted that he was "very disturbed and extremely alarmed" by the loss of so many of his regular choice players.

He said: "If you take the World Cup squad we have Colin Hendry struggling to be fit, John Collins, Christian Dailly, Billy McKinlay, and Kevin Gallacher all out.

"Also, Colin Calderwood isn't getting a game at Tottenham and Scot Gemmill isn't playing for Forest. As if that wasn't bad enough Craig Burley has only played 20 minutes since recovering from injury and Phil O'Donnell has missed his team's last two matches.

It is because he is almost short of enough players to form a quorum that Brown will watch Everton's Don Hutchison again next week. Brown added: "He isn't a front player, but Everton have been using him there and I am going to take another look.

"This is the worst period in terms of injuries to experienced players that I've ever known, and it could get worse.

"Jess has been doing well and if Spencer gets back in his side after suspension and if he plays well I will have to look at him also."

Brown is not about to let Spencer's acts of folly prevent him from being recalled and allowed to take his caps tally to 15, because the manager can't afford



the luxury of frowning on anyone who could do him a turn against Bosnia-Herzegovina and then the Czech Republic.

The first match will be at Ibrox on March 31 and the second tie will be at Celtic Park four days later.

The striker feared his chance of a Scotland recall had gone when he was sent off in Motherwell's match against Celtic.

As he left the pitch, Spencer gave Celtic's fans the V sign, but he is fortunate the SFA have turned a blind eye to that gesture, allowing Brown to consider playing him up front with Jess.

UK

KOREAN HAMMERS STILL A LONG WAY OFF

The word cosmopolitan certainly can be used for West Ham United. The Hammers are currently well entrenched in the Australian game (see Peter Storrie interview), have numerous players of varied nationalities (Leeds take note) and now they are looking at a couple of South Koreans.

Looking can mean many things, but club director of football, Peter Storrie, currently in Australia, told Soccer Weekly exclusively that the Koreans were simply training with the Hammers and any signing is somewhat off the mark.

But, while some Premier League clubs look on with bemusement and curiosity, the Hammers are well aware of the financial benefits to be gained by tapping into a Far East football market awash with cash.

Choi, a 23-year-old striker valued at £3m by his club Sangmu, is the Michael Owen of South Korean football. Midfielder Kim, of Chunnam Dragons, has a £1m pricetag, having played in all South Korea's games in last year's World Cup Finals. Both already have hero status in their homeland, instantly recognised and feted wherever they go.

Nevertheless, West Ham know that by signing players from that region they would stand to benefit just as Perugia did when they paid £2.75m to take Japan star Hidetoshi Nakata to Italy last summer.

Now you cannot move in Japan without spotting a Perugia replica shirt while the Serie A side have been inundated by offers from Japanese TV stations for the rights to show home games involving midfielder Nakata.

A FIFA-licensed agent involved in helping European clubs dip into the vast well of Eastern riches revealed: It's the best transfer investment Perugia have ever made. Thanks to all the commercial spin-offs in Japan, the club have already made more in one season than they normally make in four.

The interest in football in the Far East is absolutely phenomenal and it's growing because of the World Cup being staged there in 2002. There is already huge interest in South Korea over the two international players training with West Ham. If they sign, then West Ham will be big news in the Far East and the financial spin-offs will be incredible. They will get back their initial investment many fold.

Extra merchandising and TV deals would be worth millions to the London club. The growing awareness of the Far East market could explain why West Ham have been intent on playing down the proposed deals.

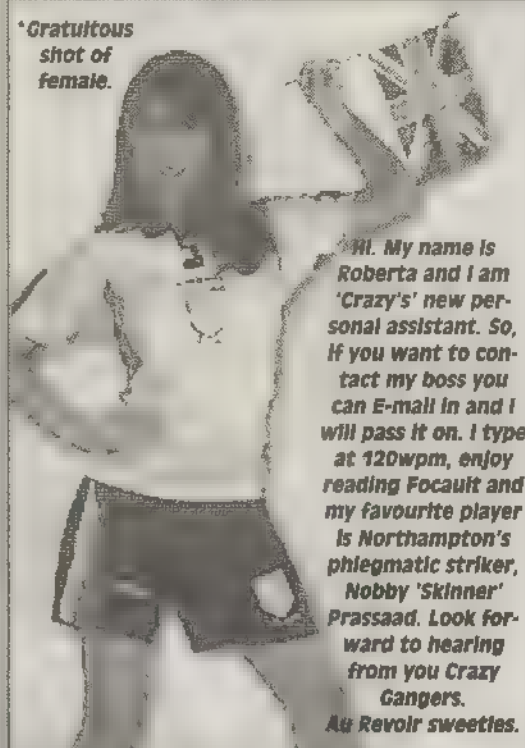
In the light of the proposed BSkyB takeover of Manchester United, there has been talk of an Old Trafford attempt to buy Nakata, who came to prominence in France 98. The money men are understood to be in favour of such a deal to help Rupert Murdoch's business interests in the land of the rising sun.

Whereas in past seasons talk of importing talent from the Far East might be regarded as fanciful, now there is a hard business edge to it. Soon there could be a gold rush with European clubs falling over themselves as they home in on the yen.

Could be a very smart business move by the savvy Hammers should they explore this type of option in the future.

'CRAZY' CRAIG WILSON'S UK

'Gratuitous shot of female.'



Hi. My name is Roberta and I am 'Crazy's' new personal assistant. So, if you want to contact my boss you can E-mail in and I will pass it on. I type at 120wpm, enjoy reading Foucault and my favourite player is Northampton's phlegmatic striker, Nobby 'Skinner' Prassad. Look forward to hearing from you Crazy Gangers. As Revolr sweeties.

English coaches have a style of their own when it comes to press conferences. Fans of Forest boss Ron Atkinson will be familiar with such Ron-isms as early doors, pockets of football and the far stick, even though they won't have a clue what he means! Sunderland fanzine Sex & Chocolate recently cleared things up by running a glossary of coach speak. Just in case you can't work it out, this is what they really mean when they say "Robust midfielder" - Too fond of a Big Mac and a pint, and usually has the touch of an elephant.

"Tough tackling defender" - Dirty bastard. "Versatile player" - A donkey with no natural position who fills in for injured team-mates. "Experienced campaigner" - Mid 30s and past it. May have been a good payer in his time when he played for one of his numerous previous clubs, but a tired old plodder by the time he reaches your club. "Has the potential to be a very good player" - Half-decent youngster, but too lazy to play to his potential, which he will probably waste in the pubs and clubs of the city anyway. "Good shot stopper" - Crap goal-keeper. Especially awful at dealing with crosses.

Have it to hand when you're tuned in to the Premier League.

Being devotees of Ms. Gwyneth Paltrow the Crazy gang recently visited a picture palace to see Shakespeare in Love. Gwyneth was radiant of course. But, while crunching our popcorn, we became puzzled by her love affair with the Bard. As any scholar of English Literature will tell you, Shakespeare was indeed in love. But with whom? The Paltrow character, Viola de Lessups, is a fictional identity. Will's heart could not have gone out to her. A flick through The Comedy of Errors cleared things up. 'Am I so round with you as you with me, that like a football you do spurn me thus?' he asks. 'You spurn me hence and he will spurn me hither. If I last in this service you must case me in leather.'

Let's face it, Will was a Warwickshire lad - he must have fallen for Coventry City!

A few days ago we opened the Crazy mailbox to find a T-shirt catalogue from London's Philosophy Football.

They retail a range of shirts which seek to fuse the musings of the world's greatest philosophers with the beautiful game. It's not often the gang turn to talk of metaphysics, but during a lull in a Leichhardt Tigers game, the crowd at Lambert Park fell into a heated discussion on the relative merits of Umberto Eco and Antonio Gramsci. Who would've made the better coach; someone asked, 'The Socceroos could do with a thinker'.

The stand erupted in heated polemic as names like Camus, Baudrillard and Wittgenstein were bandied about. Didn't Eco argue that "Football is a ritual in which the disinherited revolt, unaware of an establishment which wants to keep them in a state of ecstatic enthusiasm condemned to unreality" shouted an old timer through a mouth full of souvlaki.

The Tigers were losing 3-1 at the time - this was no time to be defensive. What about Albert Camus, the French theorist and former goalkeeper? shouted a ball boy. Camus once reasoned that 'All I know most surely about morality and obligations, I owe to football'.

But despite the success of Houllier and Wenger, the Crazy gang wanted Latin flair. A quick look at the catalogue settled things. 'Football is a model of individualistic society. It demands initiative, competition and conflict, but is regulated by the unwritten rule of fair play'. Creativity, fighting spirit, sportsmanship? That settled it, Gramsci was our man.

[Philosophy Football will be happy to send you a catalogue featuring their t-shirt designs. Call +44 181 802 3499]

Email Crazy Craig at magicsponge@hotmail.com



Gratuitous Gwyneth shot



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Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

WILKINS BACK IF SEX CASE GOES AGAINST RIX?

Ray Wilkins is ready to coach Chelsea if Graham Rix is sent to jail next month. It is believed that Wilkins has made himself available to work in a caretaker capacity until Rix, the No.2 at Chelsea, is available to resume his duties at Stamford Bridge.

Wilkins, who was released by Fulham last season when he was No.2 to Kevin Keegan at Craven Cottage, was previously manager of Queens Park Rangers. He was a Chelsea hero and the club's youngest captain before leaving for Manchester United and then a successful career in Italian football.

Wilkins is on standby in case Rix, who has admitted an illegal affair with a 15-year-old girl, loses an appeal for any sentence he might receive to be suspended.

Rix has pleaded guilty to the offence and could face a sentence of up to 12 months.

It would mean he would miss the final two months of this season and the start of the next campaign when Chelsea are hopeful of playing in the Champions League.

Rix was on the bench today when Chelsea faced Liverpool at Stamford Bridge in their first match on a new £100,000 pitch.

The turf was ripped up 10 days ago after the 1-1 draw with Blackburn and quickly relaid.

Players who trained on it last Wednesday were understood to be delighted and chairman Ken Bates said: 'We will know if it is a success at 4.45pm on Saturday evening.' Manchester United attempted a similar move but their pitch is still far from perfect.

However, Chelsea are confident that their gamble will succeed.

Players had complained that the previous heavy surface did not suit their passing game. Chelsea are also considering a move for Celtic's £1 million-rated goalkeeper Stewart Kerr. They had the 24-year-old watched last week.

Steve Stone accused relegation favourites Nottingham Forest of broken promises as he waits to trigger a get-out clause in his contract at the end of the season.

As bottom-of-the-table Forest took on Charlton in today's basement battle at the Valley, midfielder star Stone declared: 'If we get relegated, I will go. No doubt about it - and my conscience will be clear.'

A clause in Stone's £15,000-a-week four-year contract, which was revamped and improved 18 months ago, allows him to quit Forest for any Premiership club offering £5million. That will alert Manchester United, Aston Villa and Newcastle, who will see 27-year-old Stone as cheap at the price after emerging as a key player at Forest in the last six rollercoaster years.

Stone added: 'I don't want to play in the First Division again. I've already been there a couple of times and now I need to give myself a Premiership platform.'

'I haven't won anything yet at club level apart from a couple of promotion medals.'

'In fact, I've never got anywhere close because I arrived at Forest at the end of the glory years under

Brian Clough.

'The fact is that I've had three broken legs in my career and now I'm looking at three relegations. I can't go through with it again because I need to give myself a good shot at the Premiership.'

Unhappy Stone pointed an accusing finger at the club's plc board headed by Nigel Wray, Irving Scholar and Phil Soar, insisting: 'I could have left two or three years ago but I felt that there was enough ambition, with the takeover, for Forest to be on the up. Instead we've been on the slide.'

'Obviously, Pierre van Hooijdonk's strike didn't help but losing Kevin Campbell and Colin Cooper were even bigger factors because we never replaced them.'

'I stayed because I honestly thought we would have kept our best players on the back of promotion.'

Middlesbrough did just that as well as adding Cooper and Gary Pallister to their squad and I thought we would have done the same.

'But you could never find out what was happening behind the scenes.'

'I would not have swapped our strike force of Campbell and van Hooijdonk for many already in the Premiership.'

'But I actually felt that Pierre would be proved right



when he said Forest didn't have enough good players for the Premiership - now his words have come back to haunt the club.'

Stone established himself in England's Euro 96 squad, winning nine caps before a knee injury ruled him out for almost 12 months as Forest slipped back into the First Division.

He added: 'I want the chance to play for England again. You look at form players in the side and you won't see many coming from clubs like Forest, Charlton or Southampton.'

'It doesn't happen and that's why I want to stay in the Premiership with a successful club. I've been at Forest since I was a kid and now it's time to move on for the sake of my career.'

'It's as bad as it gets as far as disappointments go for us.'

'It's going to be awful going to Charlton knowing that we were a much better side than them last season and

PEREZ BACK IN FRANCE AFTER TRAGEDY

NEWCASTLE United keeper Lionel Perez has gone back home to France to answer an SOS from Lyon. Perez will join the French club after their keeper Luk Borell was tragically killed in a car crash just outside Lyon.

The transfer window in France has actually closed but Lyon have received special permission from their Football Association to sign 31-year-old Perez because of the tragic events.

United chief executive Freddie Fletcher told local media: 'We took a telephone call from Lyon asking if we could help out because they had a goalkeeper killed in a car crash.'

'The transfer window is now shut over there but because of the tragic circumstances and the sensitivity of the goalkeeping position they have got special permission.'

'We were asked to help out and our answer was yes.'

Now Perez, who will be allowed to leave on a free transfer, and Lyon have to decide whether to make the move permanent or just on loan until the end of the season.

Whatever happens it looks as though Perez's United career is over without him having made a senior competitive appearance.

For apart from his pre-season Umbro Cup heroics against Middlesbrough and 45 minutes against Juventus in a friendly at St James's Park, the closest Perez got to the action was a seat on the substitutes' bench.

Certainly the writing was on the wall for the erratic keeper when manager Ruud Gullit promoted Steve Harper to second choice behind Shay Given shortly after taking over.

And before Christmas Perez found himself fourth choice behind Given, Harper and youngster Peter Keen in the pecking order.

And this has only increased the fans' puzzlement as to why Kenny Dalglish signed Perez on a free from Sunderland in the first place.

Perez played for both Nimes and Bordeaux before

joining Sunderland.

Sunderland underwent an unusual form of travelling before the kick-off in the crunch First Division clash at Oxford United.

The Wearsiders travelled from their overnight hotel to the Manor Ground ... in the Oxford United coach!

The club had hired for the day the same coach firm which transports the Oxford squad to matches around the country. And even the same bus and driver!

United's boss Malcolm Shotton, meanwhile, had promised Sunderland a far from easy ride on the Manor's infamous sloping pitch.

He said: 'Sunderland are going to be First Division champions, no doubt about that. They've had a great season and they've the squad and backing to do well.'

'But we are as desperate for the three points tonight as they are and we haven't forgotten that 7-0 hammering earlier in the season.'

'They deserved the win but not by that margin. In the first half we were as good as them but everything they hit seemed to go in.'

In the first ever pay-per-view TV match at Oxford, it was the home side that took the honours in a 0-0 draw. A minute from the end Oxford substitute Andy Thomson fired in a shot which rebounded off the inside of a post, cannoned off Chris Makin towards an empty net and only a last-ditch dive by Thomas Sorensen kept the ball out of the net.

However the Red and Whites suffered a major blow when Niall Quinn limped off after nine minutes and was replaced by Daniele Dichio.

The substitute had a great chance six minutes later when a cross by Darren Holloway reached him in front of goal and only ten yards out, but he failed to make contact with the ball.

United had another escape 18 minutes from the end of the match which lived up in the closing minutes. The impressive Kevin Phillips put Gavin McCann clean through but with only on-loan 'keeper Paul Gerrard to beat from ten yards he stroked the ball wide.

Four minutes later Dichio created an opening for Allan Johnston who drove straight a Gerrard, who in his last game before returning to Everton saved a close-range effort by Phillips.

Both sides strived for a winner and there was still time after Sunderland's last-minute escape for Makin to cut inside and fire in a curling shot which Gerrard did well to push away.

Both managers expressed satisfaction with the result. Sunderland's Peter Reid said: 'They closed us down in the first half but afterwards we created lots of chances but could not stick them away.'

Reid added: 'I was pleased with the way my players went about it considering we had three changes. It was another clean sheet which is pleasing and I have to be happy with 70 points at this stage of the season.'

Oxford manager Malcolm Shotton said: 'We hit a post late on and they had one or two chances - both teams could have won it, so overall a draw was a fair result I feel.'

So in the end the travel arrangements did not help the visitors, but they are still firm favourites to be in the big league next year, and that's got to be good news for their fanatical supporters.

VIERI, SALAS ... OWEN?

Imagine that as a forward line? Surely one capable of harming any given defence, however England striker Michael Owen denied on Thursday he is ready to move to Lazio in a £25.0 million pounds transfer despite intense press speculation in Italy.

The Liverpool teenager also squashed rumours he had signed a deal to give the Italian league leaders first option if he decides to leave Liverpool in the future.

'I don't know where the story came from. I've certainly never heard anything about it,' he told the Liverpool Echo.

'Obviously people are going to think there is something in it because they will have heard stories about Lazio having first refusal on me but that's not true either.'

Owen also laughed off claims that his father Terry, a former Everton player, had gone to Italy

to set-up the deal.

'I even saw something saying my dad had gone over to Italy.'

'My dad would never do a deal for me. He just stays in the background and watches me progress. It wasn't nice to read that.'

Owen, 19, now wants to concentrate on helping Liverpool win trophies after yet another unsuccessful season.

And he believes French manager Gerard Houllier has created an atmosphere at the club which is geared towards winning the premier league title.

'Obviously it is flattering to be linked with a club like Lazio but I'm still very happy at Liverpool.'

'The manager has got a good thing going at this club.'

'We are building a lot for the future and I think



Michael Owen ... I can't remember an Italian offer.

that in the next few years we'll really start challenging for the title. I want to be part of that.'

Owen has scored 20 goals in all competitions this season and his 15 in the league for Liverpool make him the joint-highest scorer in the premier

league this season along with Dwight Yorke of Manchester United.

Earlier last week an Italian sports magazine Guerin Sportivo quoted Owen as saying he had under-written an option to join Lazio.

Compiled by and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

Premier League highlights

EVERTON V WIMBLEDON

Everton grabbed another vital point on Saturday in their fight against relegation, having the better of a 1-1 draw with Wimbledon at Goodison Park.

Despite missing several key players Everton dictated much of the play, with Olivier Dacourt at the heart of their effort.

A string of early chances went begging, Dacourt chipping over from 20 yards before Nicky Barmby saw his shot deflected for a corner.

Wimbledon took the lead on 14 minutes against the run of play and with their first attack of the game. Efan Ekoku punished an error by Everton skipper Dave Watson to drive home a shot from 20 yards.

Everton could have been level two minutes later when Francis Jeffers took on Dean Blackwell, wrong footed the defender and fired a low shot inches wide across the face of the goal.

Barmby squandered two further opportunities and then Michael Ball could not quite reach an excellent John Oster cross to the far post.

Everton never lost heart however, Oster and Barmby continually driving them forward. Barmby saw a 20-yard shot held by Neil Sullivan after 30 minutes.

Minutes later, the Dons goalkeeper gathered another shot following a surging run by the midfielder.

Jeffers always looked dangerous, forcing Sullivan into a save with a right-foot shot before securing the equaliser on 56 minutes. Danny Cadamarteri chipped in a fine cross and the teenage striker rose to head home.

A penalty claim at the death could have given Everton all three points, but Wimbledon survived to share the spoils.

CHARLTON V FOREST

Charlton Athletic and Nottingham Forest fought out a goalless draw at The Valley on Saturday, a result that leaves Nottingham Forest fighting an almost impossible battle to retain their Premiership status.

Charlton looked the better side, and should have taken the lead as early as the fifth minute. Swedish striker Martin Pringle, who has already contributed four goals to the cause, blasted over the bar from 12 yards when completely unchallenged.

Forest found themselves under consistent pressure, particularly in the second period, and might have lost all three points but for a resolute performance from goalkeeper Mark Crossley.

First, he threw himself acrobatically to his right to claw away a Carl

Tiler header which was bound for the top-left corner. Then he tipped away a blistering 20-yard drive from

Charlton's tireless captain Mark Kinsella.

The saves came thick and fast in the second period. A superb stretch low down to deny Neil Redfearn, a brilliant block on a Keith Jones piledriver and a fine save from Carl Tiler.

Even when Forest captain Steve Chettle clumsily brought down John Robinson in the Forest area, Crossley managed to keep out the resulting Neil Redfearn penalty.

Charlton might still have snatched the points in the dying moments when Clive Mendonca's shot from close range was brilliantly blocked by Stale Stensaas.

The result leaves Alan Curbishley's side still heading in the right

direction, though they have much work to do, especially in attack, if they are to remain in the top flight.

TOTTENHAM V DERBY

At White Hart Lane, Jose Dominguez stepped off the bench to set up Tim Sherwood for the goal that saved Tottenham a point in a 1-1 draw with Derby County.

Spurs should have won this match, strikers Chris Armstrong and Steffen Iversen proving particularly wasteful as the home side passed up a stream of scoring opportunities.

Armstrong fired wastefully across goal through as early as the sixth minute before midfielder Steffen Freund drove hopelessly over the bar from a tempting opportunity just outside the box.

Iverson was then off target before Horacio Carbonari headed off the line after Ramon Vega launched a towering header from Darren Anderton's free-kick.

Derby took 25 minutes to raise a goalscoring threat, Wanchopé shooting past the near post.

The visitors still managed to take the lead against the run of play, courtesy of Deon Burton's poaching strike just after the break.

Stefan Schnoor's attempt to clear David Ginola's left-wing cross almost brought Spurs an instant equaliser but Russell Hoult scrambled the ball away as Armstrong moved in for the kill.

Spurs finally made the breakthrough when Dominguez provided the required touch of inspiration. The diminutive Portuguese winger burst past two defenders and his perfect through-ball sent former Blackburn skipper Sherwood into the box for a sweeping right-foot finish.

A sustained period of Tottenham pressure followed, but Derby goalkeeper Hoult stood firm to resist a fierce barrage and the visitors emerged with a point they scarcely deserved.

VILLA V COVENTRY

Coventry City took a step towards Premiership survival on Saturday with a 4-1 hammering of Aston Villa at Villa Park.

The visitors played with a confidence that made a mockery of their lowly position on the table.

Skipper Gary McAllister and Dutchman George Boateng controlled the midfield, while Villa battled to handle the pace and skill of Darren Huckerby and Australian John Aloisi up front.

Villa midfielder Simon Grayson was first to threaten when his 25-yard effort was deflected only inches wide.

It was Coventry who quickly found their touch

The gloom increased for the home side six minutes into the second period when Boateng doubled Coventry's lead.

Huckerby crossed low to the near post where Boateng's path to goal looked to be blocked by Scimeca, but he managed to turn and squeeze the ball past Oakes from the narrowest of angles.

Former Sky Blues hero Dion Dublin then handed Villa a lifeline. Paul Merson and Lee Hendrie combined well before Joachim was brought down in the penalty area by Richard Shaw and Dublin thumped in the resulting penalty.



Aston Villa's Grayson is tackled by Coventry's Telfer. Coventry shocked the home side 4-1.

though. A turn in the box by Aloisi took him past Riccardo Scimeca but the end product was a weak left-footed shot straight at Michael Oakes.

Steve Watson then denied the onrushing Aloisi with a tackle at full stretch after McAllister sent a teasing low centre across the area.

Villa were restricted to long-range efforts and it came as no surprise when Coventry went ahead in the 25th minute. Former Villa man Stephen Froggatt sent the ball in to Aloisi who again held off Scimeca's challenge before sliding a low shot across Oakes into the corner of the net.

All Villa could muster before half-time was a long-range effort from Steve Watson which was comfortably saved by Coventry goalkeeper Magnus Hedman.

The goal sparked a spell of Villa pressure but with 19 minutes left, Aloisi struck again to give Coventry some breathing space.

Froggatt floated in a free-kick from the left and Aloisi beat Gareth Southgate to volley the ball past the exposed Oakes.

With six minutes left, Boateng raced clear of the Villa defence and, as Oakes came racing out of his goal, Boateng chipped over him into the net.

Gordon Strachan will be delighted with the result at a ground where Coventry have a poor record. Villa manager John Gregory has problems, however, and must find a way to arrest an alarming slide which has seen his side drop out of title contention.

WEST HAM V BLACKBURN

Paolo di Canio produced an inspirational performance at Upton Park on Saturday as West Ham defeated Brian Kidd's resurgent Blackburn Rovers 2-0.

Di Canio and Trevor Sinclair led the way as the home side pulled the Rovers defence apart.

The Hammers took the lead after 27 minutes. Di Canio intuitively picked out centre half Ian Pearce at the far post, and his well directed header squeezed in off the inside of the upright.

Eight minutes later West Ham doubled their advantage. England Under-21 captain Frank Lampard threaded a short pass to Israeli international Eyal Berkovic in the six-yard box, and an instinctive ball across the goal eluded John Filan for Di Canio to apply the finish.

Blackburn refused to accept defeat though, the second half arrival of Damien Duff and Kevin Davies

resurrecting their enthusiasm.

A long throw from Callum Davidson was flicked on by Ashley Ward only for Nathan Blake to shoot over.

Northern Ireland international Keith Gillespie twice fired wide from long range while Duff's fine arching shot looked to be beating Shaka Hislop before he produced a remarkable save.

But for all Blackburn's skill and hard work they lacked the expertise to break down Hammers defence.

Meanwhile, the home side were able to make the most of a relatively diminutive Rovers back line, always looking dangerous from set pieces. Di Canio almost added to his goal in the 74th minute with a jinking solo run complemented by a curling effort which flew just wide of Filan's right-hand post.

The home side were impressive and full value for their win. If midfield marshal Marc-Vivien Foe can add graft to his undoubted talent, Harry Redknapp might once again be thinking of a berth in Europe.



Derby's Lars Bohinen attempts to hold off Tottenham's Tim Sherwood. The game ended 1-1.

Compiled and written by

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UK

Premier League Highlights

MAN U V SOUTHAMPTON

Manchester United had to fight hard to overcome a spirited Southampton side at Old Trafford on Saturday, but eventually triumphed 2-1 ahead of their Champions League quarterfinal next Wednesday.

United had insisted that they would not be distracted by their midweek date with Inter Milan, but from the first whistle it became clear that their minds were elsewhere.

Relegation-threatened Saints started brightly, James Beattie heading wide early on from an Egil Ostenslad cross.

On 13 minutes, United briefly roused themselves from a slow start when the impressive Ken Monkou headed away a Ryan Giggs cross. From the resulting corner, Patrick Colleter cleared a Dwight Yorke header off the line.

Southampton played the better football however, and Chris Marsden forced a decent save from Peter Schmeichel with a 25-yard strike. Minutes later, Ostenslad should have done better when the United defence opened up in front of him, but he could only shoot weakly and straight at Schmeichel.

United picked up the pace before the interval and Saints skipper Jason Dodd denied Giggs a 43rd-minute opener. Beckham escaped down the right and crossed to the back post only for Dodd to stop the Welshman's header on the

line.

Roy Keane appeared after the interval, and United slowly improved as the second half wore on. Yorke had a header blocked before Giggs squandered a golden opportunity on the hour from a cross by Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

With a quarter of the game remaining Southampton brought on Matthew Le Tissier, who had started on the bench following his recovery from calf and hamstring problems. The inspirational midfielder quickly made an impact and within seven minutes of coming on Beattie headed his corner against the bar.

United took the lead eleven minutes from time. Henning Berg nodded down Beckham's corner and Yorke set up Keane to score his fourth goal of the season.

Worse was to follow for Southampton and in the 83rd minute Beckham found Yorke unmarked on the left. The striker rounded Jones before slotting home his 22nd goal of the season.

There was still time for Beattie to hit the woodwork again when it seemed easier to score, after Schmeichel had saved from Le Tissier.

Le Tissier restored some pride for Saints when he scored a consolation goal in stoppage time.

CHELSEA V LIVERPOOL

Chelsea used the newly laid Stamford Bridge pitch to good effect on Saturday, cruising to a 2-1 win over Liverpool and maintaining their push for the premiership crown.

The home side looked particularly dangerous in the first half, dismantling the Liverpool defence time and again with almost embarrassing ease.

Starting confidently, Chelsea threatened as early as the third minute. Romanian Dan Petrescu, playing on the right side of midfield, crossed for Tore Andre Flo but Liverpool goalkeeper David James managed to scramble the ball away.

On seven minutes Chelsea took the lead, courtesy of an aberration from Phil Babb.

Gianfranco Zola crossed from the left and Dominic Matteo deflected the ball high into the air. Babb came in to clear, but his raised arm made contact with the ball and referee Paul Durkin had no hesitation in awarding a penalty. Chelsea captain Franck Leboeuf blasted home the spot kick.

Chelsea were playing some elegant football now, their passing and movement seeming to bewilder the visitors. With Petrescu and Bjarne Goldback rampant down the wings, and Jody Morris, Roberto di Matteo and Zola threatening through the middle, they ripped Liverpool apart at will.

On 17 minutes, Goldback crossed and Petrescu knocked the ball down for Zola, who attempted an audacious flick, only to see it sail just over.

Liverpool tried to impose themselves on the game, and on 23 minutes Paul Ince crossed but found nobody on the six yard line to meet the ball. Three minutes later, a rare poor clearance from Chelsea saw Robbie Fowler shoot over from 18 yards.

Just after the half hour, Liverpool fashioned their best chance of the opening 45 minutes. A superb through ball from Jamie Redknapp gave Michael Owen a run on goal, but the young striker could only manage a weak shot straight at goalkeeper Ed de Goey.

Three minutes later, Babb headed a Liverpool corner back across goal where it was met by Ince, only to sail into the side netting as the visitors did their best to compete.

Liverpool seemed to be in the ascendancy, but Chelsea exposed their defensive frailty once again seven minutes from the break.

Zola's sublime skill saw a backheeled pass send Petrescu away down the right, and when he crossed to the far post, Goldback was waiting unmarked to volley home.

Two minutes later Chelsea were almost three up following another poor Liverpool effort as James came from his line to deny Flo.

Just before half time Liverpool were caught square yet again, only a bad first touch from Zola preventing a run on goal. Seconds later, Petrescu almost crowned a superb first half performance with a goal as he volleyed against the upright from an acute angle.

The second period proved less open than the first, with Chelsea seemingly content to hold onto their lead and Liverpool struggling to create goalscoring opportunities.

The home side prised Liverpool open again two minutes



Captain Frank Leboeuf scored from the penalty spot keeping Chelsea in the Premiership race.

after the interval, but Flo could not convert a far post cross.

Five minutes later, Owen cut in from the left and sent an inviting cross along the six yard line, with nobody available to apply the finish.

After 67 minutes, Petrescu had an opportunity to seal the points. Sent clear by Goldback, he had only James to beat, but delayed his shot too long and allowed Dominic Matteo to come across and make a decisive challenge.

Fourteen minutes from time, di Matteo put Zola through with a clever, weighted through-ball, but the little Italian dragged his shot across the face of goal.

A minute later, the Liverpool striking duo gave their side a seemingly unlikely path back into the game. Fowler provided an incisive pass through the middle and Owen's pace took him clear of the Chelsea defence to slide the ball past de Goey.

Liverpool then raised the tempo, causing some anxious moments for the home support in the dying minutes. However, despite the late pressure, Chelsea held on to claim the points.

Chelsea manager Gianluca Vialli will be satisfied with the result, which enables his side to keep pace with Manchester United at the top of the table.

For Gerard Houllier and Liverpool though, the outlook seems bleak. The manager has done nothing to alleviate the defensive deficiencies since taking sole charge, and the once powerful Anfield outfit have degenerated into mediocrity.

On the strength of this performance, they will struggle to claim a European berth, and it seems a matter of time before the fans begin to lose patience.



Dwight Yorke scores his 22nd of the season, as Man utd. defeat Southampton at home.

SHEFF WED V BORO

Sheffield Wednesday ended their Hillsborough goal drought with a 3-1 victory over Middlesbrough on Saturday, extending the visitors' winless streak to nine premiership matches.

Danny Wilson's side moved into the top half of the table for the first time since mid-September, and left Boro staring at a relegation dogfight.

Middlesbrough looked short on confidence in the early minutes, allowing Wednesday to dictate the pace and tempo of the game.

Benito Carbone fired narrowly wide after 70 seconds, and 90 seconds later Andy Booth headed Petter Rudi's delicate ball across the face of goal, only to shave the woodwork.

The home side took the lead in the 11th minute. Carbone and Rudi combined well and Andy Hinchcliffe's low, near-post cross was tucked home by Booth for his fifth of the season.

Wednesday lost their early momentum however, and allowed the visitors to make inroads with a battling display.

In the 25th minute, normally reliable skipper Peter Atherton was guilty of a weak headed back pass, allowing Mikkel Beck to steal in. The Dane found himself with only goalkeeper Kevin Pressman to beat, but his first-time drive from 12 yards whistled past the post.

Steve Vickers then went close with a near post header from a Gascoigne corner, and Hamilton Ricard headed against the bar from an Andy Townsend free-kick four minutes before the interval.

Wednesday produced a solid defensive display in the second half, throwing themselves in the way of anything Boro could muster.

The disciplined defensive effort paid off in the 77th minute when

Hinchcliffe's corner out wide to Wim Jonk allowed the Dutch international to pick out an unmarked Danny Sonner at the far post for his second goal in two games.

Boro pulled a goal back within a minute when Robbie Mustoe turned and fired under Pressman from close range.

Any hope of salvaging a point, however, was blown away just 90 seconds later when Booth and Hinchcliffe again combined for the third, the striker heading home a near post free-kick.

Booth might have claimed a hat-trick, but with just over five minutes remaining failed to beat Mark Schwarzer from point blank range.



Liverpool keeper David James saves well from Chelsea's Tore Flo with Domenic Matteo watching on

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